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*“California is growing in population  
more rapidly than any other  
state...Unless a comprehensive  
plan for the preservation of recre-  
ational and scenic areas is set in  
motion, our children and our  
children’s children will want for the  
opportunities for out of door life  
that make for sound bodies, clear  
brains and good citizenship.”*

*Duncan McDuffie  
January 1925*

# Preface

In 2001, the Planning Division of the California Department of Parks and Recreation reinstated a program providing research and technical assistance to public park and recreation service providers and nonprofit organizations supporting the parks and recreation profession. This function, known as Park and Recreation Technical Services (PARTS) links community-based organizations, Department staff and local agency professionals by preparing studies, workshops, articles, and guidebooks on subjects ranging from *Paying for Parks – An Overview of Funding Opportunities for California’s Local Park and Recreation Agencies* to *A Park and Recreation Professionals’ Glossary* to the more recently published *California Business Leaders’ Opinions of Parks and Recreation*.

The goal of this how-to guidebook on grantwriting is to assist service providers with practical tips on researching and preparing winning grant proposals. This guidebook is designed to help you focus on grant funds that are competitive in nature rather than block grants. Emphasis has been placed on public agency grants, although an overview of foundation funding sources has been included.

It is clear, with the passage of recent bond acts (The Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Act of 2000 and The California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Act of 2002), that people need and want quality parks in their communities, their regions and around the state. This guidebook is intended to help service providers move forward in meeting the needs of Californians for the health and social benefits that park and recreation land, facilities, and programs provide.

This guidebook is designed to increase the service provider’s knowledge of the competitive grant process and how to locate and leverage funds to supplement an organization’s budget. In addition, this guidebook is designed to augment the numerous existing resources for grantwriters. It outlines an easy-to-follow, systematic approach for organizing and presenting grant proposals, ultimately saving park and recreation professionals precious time and energy. This document also provides information on using computer databases and websites and provides sample proposals, letters, budgets, and other narratives that will be found helpful to the grantwriter.

There are many ‘how-to’ books, videos, and compact discs available at grant and nonprofit resource centers, on-line through the world wide web, in bookstores and in libraries. There is an extensive amount of information available on-line, ranging from current census material to the wide range of available funding sources. In-depth training courses are available through universities and colleges, and in the private sector. Additionally, professional grantwriters may be hired to assist agencies and organizations with locating funding sources and preparing grant proposals.

This document is designed to provide meaningful resource material for all levels of grantwriters – from beginners to those who have advanced knowledge. The ideal audience targeted by this guidebook is the park and recreation service provider that has strong programmatic or facility knowledge, but needs guidance on grantwriting fundamentals.

*“Open space means many different things. It may be a city park or playground; it may be the beauty of the open road; it may be the challenge of the trackless wilderness. Open space—handsome, meaningful, open space available for enjoyment—is not only a dimension of geography but a dimension of life. The protection of its beauty and the preservation and enhancement of its usefulness are important parts of our total conservation.”*

*George B. Hartzog, Jr.  
former Director of the National Park  
Service.*

# Introduction

Local, state and federal park and recreation service providers are challenged to balance increasingly stretched budgets while providing high quality programs and safe, interesting, and well-maintained facilities. Grant funds have been regularly used to supplement agency budgets and provide funding for many programs and projects. Park and recreation professionals know that if their grant request is successful, grants can help provide a wide range of additional services and additional park amenities ranging from renovating play equipment surfaces, building boat launch facilities, and constructing trails to acquiring conservation easements, offering youth theater programs, and providing senior outings. In addition to the areas listed above, grant funds may be found for park planning and design, research and collaboration, capital improvements, educational, environmental, historical, cultural, and therapeutic programs. Increasingly, grants are used to provide funding for planning, project design, project administration, and program evaluation. The list is almost endless; however, grants typically do not fund routine maintenance and/or administrative overhead.

As agency budgets become more constrained, grant dollars are aggressively being sought by larger numbers of competitors. And, as more grant applications are submitted, the competition is even more fierce for the billions of dollars awarded annually. Today, grantors can choose more specifically where they want to allocate funds and are more critical in evaluating grant proposals.

Learning how to go after grants can at first seem overwhelming. If you have ever applied for a competitive grant and were unsuccessful, you're not alone. In fact, most requests – 80 to 95 percent of all applications – are declined, even if the request is based on a worthwhile idea and the proposal is on time, well-written, and convincingly supported. Clearly, with this intense competition, winning a grant requires doing your homework. Grant seekers who are prepared, do their research well, and write the most compelling proposals are the most likely to receive funding. Once selected, agencies that develop a reputation for successful grant implementation will increase their chances for future grant funds.

The guidebook is intended to serve as an introductory reference; every effort has been made to make it as user-friendly as possible. To help you research grant funders and prepare applications, the appendix includes a glossary of commonly used grant terms and sample letters, and a selected list of foundation funders known for their interest in the field of parks and recreation.

*“The best advice I like to give to grant seekers is to keep the grant proposal simple, make it concise, be sure it adheres to the funder’s guidelines and be sure that your proposed project meets the mission and goals of the funding agency.”*

*Jan Stohr, Executive Director  
Nonprofit Resource Center*

**At a Glance**

**A Few Commonly Used Grant Terms:**

(These definitions may vary among granting agencies. Many more are found in Appendix C)

Administering State Agency – State agency, department, or division, primary sub-unit that has direct administrative responsibility for the program.

Application – Written form outlining the requirements of the grant.

Front-end – To pay for incurred costs prior to receiving grant funding.

Grantor – The organization that provides a grant to a grantee.

Grantee – A person/organization who has a contract for grant funds.

Guidelines – Procedures set forth by a funder that grant seekers should follow when approaching a grantmaker.

Nonprofit organization – Charitable and tax-exempt organization; a.k.a. 501(c)(3)

Program Officer – Staff member who is responsible for screening grant applications, reviewing proposals, and assisting potential grantees.



# 1. What Are Grants?

Grants are funding programs created by an agency to target an end-user or beneficiary of the funds. Many government or public grants are usually classified as either block or categorical, and project-oriented or formula-oriented. Other grant programs have requirements for matching funds, while others are restricted to a specific type of purpose, qualifying geographic area, recipient organization, or group.

Most grants are competitive, although some are awarded through non-competitive and/or less-competitive processes. One example is a block grant that is awarded through Proposition 40, The California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002. The focus of this guidebook is on competitive grant funding sources.

Grants are not randomly distributed; organizations and individuals have to apply for them. The monetary amounts, frequency of distribution, and steps for requesting grants vary substantially, yet the application process is very much the same.

Grants should be considered as supplemental funding to enhance a park and recreation service provider's programs. Grant awards are not guaranteed, and therefore, they should not be requested for projects or programs that are considered mission-critical. And, it is always wise to have a back-up plan in case the grantor says no. It is better to plan ahead than to panic after it is too late.

When applying for a grant, the applicant prepares a well thought-out document, known as a proposal. The proposal clearly and concisely states why a project is being proposed, what will be accomplished, who or what and how the project will provide a needed benefit or change and, of course, how much is being requested. The applying park agency or nonprofit organization should be able to document its organizational history, strengths in ongoing oversight (monitoring, staff assessments, and evaluation), conducting outreach and communications among various constituencies and stakeholders (donors, constituents, and decision-makers), and bringing the project to completion. The proposal should describe clearly who will benefit from the grant funding and what changes will occur if they are successful in getting the grant award.

Agencies that have supporting nonprofit organizations, such as a *friends-of* group, are finding that the nonprofit group is often the most acceptable applicant for many charitable and corporate grants.

*Grant awards are made via execution of a contract or a grant agreement. When applying for funds to be awarded, it is usually necessary to complete a number of different forms covering both program and financial information. In the case of grants, especially from foundations, a narrative proposal, a budget, and tax exemption letter from the IRS is often sufficient and there are seldom many forms to fill out. For grants from federal, state, and local government agencies, the forms used include program descriptions, financial information, and certificates and assurances that certain employment, administrative, and business procedures and practices will be followed. The execution of a contract or agreement further defines the terms and conditions of the award.*

**Grant funds can be used for:**

*Annual campaigns  
Awards/prizes/competitions  
Building/renovations  
Capital campaigns  
Cause-related marketing  
Collections acquisition  
Collections management/preservation  
Commissioning new projects  
Computer systems and equipment  
Conferences/seminars  
Consulting services  
Continuing support  
Curriculum development  
Debt reduction  
Demonstration grants  
Donated equipment  
Donated land  
Donated products  
Emergency funds  
Employee matching gifts  
Employee-related scholarships  
Employee volunteer services  
Endowments/endowment funds  
Equipment  
Exchange programs  
Exhibitions  
Faculty/staff development  
Fellowship funds  
Film/video/radio  
General operating support  
Grants to individuals  
In-kind gifts  
Income development  
Internship funds  
Land acquisition  
Loaned talent  
Management development  
Matching funds  
Performance/productions  
Professorships  
Program development  
Program evaluation  
Program related investments/loans  
Public relations services  
Publications  
Research  
Scholarship funds  
Scholarships to individuals  
Seed money  
Sponsorships  
Student aid  
Student loans to individuals  
Technical assistance*

## **2. How Can Grants Be Used?**

Grant funds can be used for capital projects involving land acquisition, facility renovation, projects, equipment purchases, capacity building, planning and research, and development purposes, as well as for a wide variety of recreation programs. Many governmental grants can be used to fund projects and park facility improvements such as trails, structures, and boat ramps. Generally, funding for personnel and routine park maintenance is more difficult to find and is not available through most governmental or corporation grant sources. Some government and foundation agencies provide funding for planning and for programmatic purposes, but it is more difficult to locate and secure them.

Grant funds can come in all shapes and sizes. They can provide for both cash and non-cash contributions such as those helping to secure computer equipment, land, office supplies, and consulting time. The alphabetical list of funding types on the opposite page can be considered for funding a recreation program, park facility, planning and/or research project. For full definitions, please refer to Appendix C. The list of funding types shows that grant funds can come in many forms for many purposes.

*“The first rule of effective communication is: Know your audience! When you answer a government-agency RFP, you have a much higher likelihood of success if you present your proposal with each of the three tiers of reviewers in mind: mistake finders, proposal evaluators, and decision makers.”*

*Excerpted from Best Practices,  
American Institute of Architects,  
Washington D.C.*

### 3. Who Provides Grants?

Too often a grant applicant will focus on their own agency's needs instead of attempting to closely match their projects with the prospective funder's mission and priorities. There is a balance between getting your agency's needs met and meeting the needs of the funder. Sometimes agencies get into a position where they do not adequately address the funder's guidelines or they find themselves in the position of changing the focus of their agency to meet the needs of the funder. Grant providers supply funds that help address a perceived social, economic or environmental need, an injustice, or inequity – or what they sense to be a gap in services or resources. The gap represents the view of the world from the grantor's perspective. Successful grant seekers work hard to understand the grantor's view of the world and program priorities and align their proposal closely to the grantor's perspectives.

Granting opportunities exist at the federal, state, regional, county, and local levels of government, and through corporate, charitable and private foundations. Individuals provide numerous donations, both in funds and in donated items, however, these are not usually done through a grant. Instead, they are typically given through a bequest process. The vast majority of grant making foundations in the United States are private foundations which are a special classification of charitable organizations under the Internal Revenue Code.

#### A. Foundations

The 'private foundation' classification is assigned to those charitable organizations that receive their funds only from one or a small number of private sources. According to the Foundation Directory's web site ([www.fdncenter.org/learn](http://www.fdncenter.org/learn)), *Frequently Asked Questions*:

*"A foundation is an entity that is established as a nonprofit corporation or a charitable trust, with a principal purpose of making grants to unrelated organizations or institutions or to individuals for scientific, educational, cultural, religious, or other charitable purposes. This broad definition encompasses two foundation types: private foundations and public foundations. The most common distinguishing characteristic of a private foundation is that most of its funds come from one source, whether an individual, a family, or a corporation. A public foundation, in contrast, normally receives its assets from multiple sources, which may include private foundations, individuals, government agencies, and fees for service. Moreover, a public foundation must continue to seek money from diverse sources in order to retain its public status."*

The American Association of Fundraising Counsel (AAFRC) ([www.aafrc.org/index.html](http://www.aafrc.org/index.html)) reports, "Total charitable giving reached an estimated \$240.92 billion for 2002. The estimate for charitable giving in 2002 is 2.3 percent of gross domestic product."

- *Giving by individuals in 2002, is estimated to have increased 0.7 percent, to \$183.73 billion from a revised estimate for 2001 of \$182.47 billion. Giving by individuals represents 76.3 percent of all giving estimated for 2002.*

- *Giving **through bequests** in 2002, is estimated to have increased 2 percent to \$18.1 billion from a revised estimate of \$17.74 billion. Gifts through bequests represent 7.5 percent of the 2002 total estimated giving.*
- *Giving **by foundations** in 2002, is reported by the Foundation Center to show an estimated decrease of 1.2 percent, at \$26.9 billion for grantmaking by independent, community, and operating foundations. Grantmaking by foundations represents 11.2 percent of all estimated giving in 2002.*
- *Giving **by corporations** in 2002, is estimated to have grown by 10.5 percent to \$12.9 billion, from a revised estimate of \$11.03 billion for 2001. The rate of growth in corporate giving is attributed to continued fulfillment of pledges made in 2001; growth of in-kind giving by corporations; the Foundation Center's findings of an increase in corporate foundation grantmaking; and perhaps better reporting from corporations of deductible contributions in recent years. Giving by corporations is 5.1 percent of all estimated giving in 2002.*

The Foundation Center <http://fdncenter.org/media/news/index.html> reported on its web site for the year 2000 nearly 5,000 California foundations with total assets exceeding three trillion dollars (August 2003).

Type of Foundation	No.	Assets	Total Giving
Private (Independent)	4,388	\$50,477,123,551	\$2,741,043,521
Corporate	109	1,248,929,534	160,075,206
Community	40	4,306,836,024	424,262,538
Operating	411	14,092,391,597	106,866,132

There are four types of private foundations of interest to park and recreation grant-seekers:

### 1. Private, Independent or Family

Private foundations receive their funds from an individual or family. Many of these family foundations are very small and serve as the vehicle for the personal giving of the donor and fund local social welfare groups, alma maters and other 'favored projects' of the donor. Other private foundations, while bearing the family name, are controlled by a board totally unrelated to the original donor.

Private foundations provide financial aid to social, educational, environmental, religious, or other charitable activities. Typically, the endowment (stocks, bonds, property, and funds given to a foundation so that it may produce its own income for grant making purposes) is generally derived from a single source such as an individual, a family, or a group of individuals. Contributions to the endowment are limited by tax deductible regulations established by the IRS. Grant award decisions may be made by the donor or by members of the donor's family, by an independent board of directors or trustees, or by a bank or trust officer acting on the donor's behalf.

The W. M. Keck Foundation and the James Irvine Foundation are examples of Independent Foundations.

## 2. Corporate Sponsored

Company-based foundations receive their funds from profit-making corporations. These foundations are separate legal entities from donor companies. Officers of a company often serve on a foundation's board and company employees may provide staff work.

Grant decisions are made by a board of directors often composed of corporate officials, but may also include individuals with no corporate affiliation. Local company officials may also make decisions. Giving tends to be in fields related to corporate activities or in communities where the corporation operates. Company sponsored foundations usually give more grants but in smaller dollar amounts than independent foundations.

The Target Foundation, the Teichert Foundation, and the Kaiser Family Fund are examples of Corporate Foundations.

Corporate donations are usually made when the corporation gains visibility for making the gift. For example, the California State Parks Foundation's Earth Day program was successful in attracting these types of grants for the media value it delivered. It is also noteworthy that many corporate contributions come directly from the marketing or public relations departments, so contacting them when you are seeking funding for a visible project or special event is worth the time.

## 3. Operating

These foundations use their funds to provide charitable services directly rather than fund the projects of other organizations. Operating foundations may use their resources to conduct research or provide direct services. Endowments are usually provided from a single source, but are eligible for the maximum tax-deductible contributions from the public. An independent board of directors generally makes funding decisions. Overall, operating foundations make few, if any grant awards. Grants are generally related directly to the foundation's program.

The J. Paul Getty Trust and the Packard Humanities Institute are examples of Operating Foundations.

## 4. Community

Community foundations are similar in purpose to private foundations; however, they receive their funds from a number of different sources, rather than just one source, and are geographically restricted. The boards of community foundations are also not self-perpetuating. Representatives of the community in which the foundation is located often appoint the members. Because community foundations are broadly supported, they are not classified by the IRS as 'private foundations' but rather as 'public charities' as are hospitals and schools. Community foundations are, therefore, exempt from many of the reporting requirements and other restrictions imposed by the IRS on private foundations.

Typically, community foundations sponsor organizations that make grants for social, environmental, educational, religious, or other charitable purposes in a specific community or geographic region. Grant award decisions are made by a board of directors and are usually awarded to organizations within the local community.

*Hearts for Parks* is an example of a Community Foundation that supports the efforts of the Sunrise Recreation and Park District in Citrus Heights.

## **Top 50 California Foundations by Assets, 2000\***

<b>Foundation Name</b>	<b>FoundationType<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Assets</b>	<b>Fiscal Date</b>
1. J. Paul Getty Trust	OP	\$10,929,809,811	06/30/2000
2. The David and Lucile Packard Foundation	IN	9,793,212,529	12/31/2000
3. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation	IN	3,930,366,990	12/31/2000
4. The California Endowment	IN	3,490,256,407	02/28/2001
5. W. M. Keck Foundation	IN	1,533,721,000	12/31/2000
6. The James Irvine Foundation	IN	1,509,641,006	12/31/2000
7. The Packard Humanities Institute	OP	1,302,804,659	12/31/2000
8. Marin Community Foundation	CM	1,150,556,205	06/30/2001
9. The California Wellness Foundation	IN	1,029,461,012	12/31/2000
10. The Ahmanson Foundation	IN	964,422,000	10/31/2000
11. Weingart Foundation	IN	779,796,365	06/30/2001
12. The San Francisco Foundation	CM	741,000,000	06/30/2001
13. Wayne & Gladys Valley Foundation	IN	643,410,730	09/30/2000
14. The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation	OP	630,000,000	12/31/1999
15. California Community Foundation	CM	529,863,256	06/30/2000
16. Arnold and Mabel Beckman Foundation	IN	513,779,332	08/31/2000
17. Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund	IN	505,019,277	12/31/2000
18. The Norton Simon Foundation	IN	502,085,266	12/31/2000
19. Community Foundation Silicon Valley	CM	463,637,185	06/30/2000
20. Richard & Rhoda Goldman Fund	IN	430,000,000	12/31/2000
21. Stuart Foundation	IN	424,719,786	12/31/1999
22. The San Diego Foundation	CM	401,000,000	06/30/2001
23. The McConnell Foundation	IN	375,163,303	12/31/1999
24. H. N. & Frances C. Berger Foundation	IN	370,124,315	12/31/1999
25. The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation	IN	356,146,908	12/31/2000
26. Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation	IN	344,542,135	06/30/2000
27. The Wells Fargo Foundation	CS	340,160,426	12/31/1999
28. May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust	IN	320,556,270	12/31/2000
29. Koret Foundation	IN	320,284,438	12/31/2000
30. Peninsula Community Foundation	CM	303,232,442	12/31/1999
31. The Milken Family Foundation	IN	271,650,942	11/30/2000
32. Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Foundation	IN	267,729,622	12/31/2000
33. Miriam and Peter Haas Fund	IN	265,612,590	12/31/2000
34. Dan Murphy Foundation	IN	249,906,372	12/31/1999
35. Walter and Elise Haas Fund	IN	233,139,808	12/31/2000
36. The Oak Foundation U.S.A.	IN	227,286,550	12/31/1999
37. Broad Foundation	IN	222,308,387	12/31/2000
38. The Walt and Lilly Disney Foundation	IN	209,154,496	12/31/1999
39. Waitt Family Foundation	IN	207,252,015	12/31/2000
40. The Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Ftn.	IN	198,488,135	11/30/2000
41. Carrie Estelle Doheny Foundation	IN	191,351,663	12/31/2000
42. Henry L. Guenther Foundation	IN	184,744,357	12/31/2000
43. The Amateur Athletic Foundation of LA	IN	181,578,885	12/31/2000
44. The Fletcher Jones Foundation	IN	181,280,109	12/31/1999
45. S. H. Cowell Foundation	IN	176,802,653	12/31/2000
46. The Noyce Foundation	IN	173,718,164	12/31/2000
47. Foundation for Deep Ecology	IN	170,604,189	06/30/2000
48. Fritz B. Burns Foundation	IN	168,957,497	09/30/2000
49. Sierra Health Foundation	IN	168,643,990	06/30/2000
50. Colburn Foundation	IN	163,704,657	12/31/2000

*\*Most recent data available, however, since 2000, foundation assets have dramatically changed.*

<sup>1</sup> IN = Independent, Family or Private; CM = Community; CS = Corporate; OP = Operating

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## **B. Governmental or Public Agency Grants**

In the mid-1960s, the federal government began to use grants to support advances in health care and to address societal problems involving drug and alcohol abuse, smoking, cancer prevention and education, and land acquisition. Grants were aimed at specific categories or problem areas, and eventually came to be known as categorical grants. For example, the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund was established in 1965 and provides federal funding for statewide planning, and for acquiring and developing outdoor recreation areas and facilities.

During this period, there was an increasing trend toward local, regional and state distribution of federal grant funds. The theory was that local and state governments know their needs best and competitive grants provided the best means for ensuring fair distribution of funds for projects with a high likelihood of success.

### **1. Formula or Block Grants**

The term *formula* or *block grant* refers to a variety of granting programs by which funds are allocated according to a set criteria or formula. The criteria for allocation of these grant funds may be census data, unemployment figures, the number of individuals below the poverty level, the number of people with disabilities, etc. Formula grant programs are generally specific to a problem or geographic area and may pass through an intermediary, such as a state, city, county government, or a commission, before reaching the grantee. Per capita grants, or those grants that are awarded to a jurisdiction based on its population, are one type of formula or block grant.

### **2. Line Item/Specified Grants**

Certain projects are called out specifically in the governing or policy language of the grant program. For example, a city may be named as the recipient of a specific dollar figure for a trail connector project.

### **3. Project, Categorical, and Research Grants**

Project, categorical and research grants were designed to address specific areas with which a public (federal, state or local) program is concerned. Such areas include: drug abuse, youth obesity, teen pregnancy, truancy prevention, and research related to these areas. These are *competitive* grants and the projects are weighed on the basis of established criteria. Project and research grants are awarded by various agencies under congressionally authorized programs. Grant funds are awarded based on the proposal that most clearly matches the program guidelines or scores highest in the ranking criteria. Often governmental grants can require grant seekers to complete long and time-consuming applications.

### **4. Request for Proposals (RFP's)**

The difference between a grant and a RFP is that a RFP outlines what the agency wants done with the funds they are providing. The agency provides detailed specifications, and a contract is awarded on a lowest-bid basis to bidders who promise to fulfill the stated objective of the agency. There are several types of contracts, including fixed cost, cost reimburs-

able, and those that allow the contractor to add additional costs incurred during the contract. Governmental grant providers are usually funded through a RFP process that allows the applying agency an opportunity to outline what they would like to have done with the funding that would be provided.

## **C. Miscellaneous Grants**

### **1. Seed Grants**

Typically seed grants are competitive and fund initial projects or program expansions rather than providing funds that sustain a program or project for years. Seed grants often serve as an inducement to other grant providers. Usually these funds are sufficient for the planning of a program or project and are thought of as small amounts, although that is not always the case.

### **2. Grants vs. Loans**

Most grants do not require repayment unless specifically designated as a loan. Typically loan grants are for the up-front funding of a project therefore allowing the grant applicant to move quickly before an opportunity is lost. At some point, it is expected that the loan will be repaid; sometimes with low interest.

### **3. Reimbursable Grants**

Depending on the funding source, many grants may be reimbursable, meaning the grant applicant may need to provide the entire cost of the project up-front and submit reimbursement claims for expenditures incurred. Many competitive grants that require a match are reimbursable.

### **4. Matching Grants**

A considerable number of foundations will provide funds solely to match funds already in hand for specific projects. Many grants have a matching requirement, that is, the grant funds given cover only a portion of the total costs of the project or program targeted by the grant request. The requesting agency or organization is required to make up the difference with their own funds and with in-kind services. Matching requirements vary in amount, for example match requirements may vary from 10% to as much as 50% of the total grant.

## **D. Competitive Grants**

Many grants are competitive in nature and applicants must go through an objective review process involving specific evaluation criteria. An example of competitive grants are those offered through the Land and Water Conservation Fund program.

## **E. Selected Recreation Grant Programs Administered by the State of California**

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) administers various grant programs. The Office of Grants and Local Services (OGALS) [localservices@parks.ca.gov](mailto:localservices@parks.ca.gov) or [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov) provides further information on many of these grant programs.

- Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program (EEMP)  
These funds are to mitigate the environmental impacts of modified or new public transportation facilities. Office of Grants and Local Services, DPR, 916/653-7423.
- Habitat Conservation Fund (HCF)  
To acquire, enhance, or restore specified types of lands for wildlife or open space purposes. Office of Grants and Local Services, DPR, 916/653-7423.
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)  
Planning, acquisition, and/or development of lands and waters for outdoor recreation purposes. Office of Grants and Local Services, DPR, 916/653-7423.
- California Cultural and Historical Endowment  
The State Library has posted information on the California Cultural and Historical Endowment Grants on their web site. <http://www.library.ca.gov/CCHE/index.cfm> At time of publication, funds were not being released for this grant program.
- National Historic Preservation Fund  
Preservation of properties that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology and culture. Steade Craigo, Office of Historic Preservation, 916/651-7149, [Scrai@parks.ca.gov](mailto:Scrai@parks.ca.gov).
- Off-Highway Vehicle Fund  
Planning, acquisition, development, construction, maintenance, administration, operation, and conservation and enforcement of lands in the system. Barry Jones, Off Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation, 916/323-0954, [Bjone@parks.ca.gov](mailto:Bjone@parks.ca.gov).
- Proposition 40 The "California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002"  
Provides 870 million dollars for local assistance grants through a variety of grant programs. Office of Grants and Local Services, DPR, 916/653-7423.
- Recreational Trails Program (RTP)  
Provides funds for recreational trails and trails related projects. Office of Grants and Local Services, DPR, 916/653-7423.
- Transportation Enhancement Activities for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21)  
This is a program for recreation related transportation enhancements, e.g., facilities for pedestrians and bicycles, acquisition of scenic easements and archaeological planning and research. Office of Grants and Local Services, DPR, 916/653-7423.

## F. Information on Other Governmental Funding Sources

In addition to grant funds administered by the Department of Parks and Recreation, the following is a partial list of governmental web sites of interest to park and recreation service providers. Not all of these sites may be active by the time this document is published.

- <http://getgrants.ca.gov/> This **California government website** allows you to identify grant sources within State agencies and departments through a single search without being required to know the name of the department administering the grant.
- <http://www.water.ca.gov/grants-loans> This project funds construction projects and feasibility studies for leaking or failing **water distribution system infrastructure** in economically disadvantaged communities.
- <http://www.cya.ca.gov/juvenile/fathers.html> This program provides funds for the **Proud Parenting Program** in local communities. Program sites may include juvenile detention facilities, alternative schools, or youth centers. The program is designed to strengthen parenting knowledge and skills, provide structured family activities that give participants an opportunity to apply what they have learned, provide participants with positive adult role models who reinforce what is learned in the classroom, and foster healthy youth development through mentoring.
- <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/> **Caltrans' Local Assistance Program** oversees more than one billion dollars annually available to over 600 cities, counties and regional agencies for the purpose of improving their transportation infrastructure or providing transportation services. This funding comes from various Federal and State programs specifically designed to assist the transportation needs of local agencies.

The Section 5310 Grant Program provides capital improvement grants for the purpose of meeting transportation needs of elderly persons and persons with disabilities where public mass transportation services are otherwise unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate.

- <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/grants.htm> The Office of Policy Analysis and Research assists the planning offices, modal divisions and districts, along with local and regional agencies, to integrate **Environmental Justice** into the transportation planning process, through an inclusive, cooperative and timely approach. The intent is twofold: 1) to identify and engage communities, particularly minority and low-income, early in the planning process to prevent or mitigate adverse impacts of transportation plans, programs, and activities on communities, and 2) to factor in equity in transportation investment decisions.

The inclusion of community based organizations is an element in this process, as is the creation of community advisory councils to strengthen public participation.

The Department of Transportation incorporates the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of people of all races, cultures, and income levels, including minority and low-income populations, from the early stages of transportation planning and investment decision-making through construction, operations, and maintenance.

- <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/saferoute2.htm> The **Safe Routes to School Program** provides grant funding to local agencies to improve and enhance the safety of pedestrian and bicycle facilities and related infrastructure. On October 2, 2001, Governor Davis signed SB 10 (Soto) extending the Safe Routes to School program for three more years. The program sunsets on January 1, 2005, unless a later enacted statute deletes or extends that date.
- <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/ca/cdbg/> The State **Community Development and Block Grant** Program Planning and Technical Assistance Grants provide funding for small cities and counties for planning and evaluation studies related to housing, public works, community development, and economic development.
- <http://ocd.usda.gov/nofa.html> This is a **federal grant search engine** that you can customize to search for grant programs that are published daily in the Federal Register.
- <http://www.cfda.gov/> This web site is for the catalog of **California Federal Domestic Assistance**. Viewers will find information on a variety of programs, projects, services, and activities that provide assistance or benefits to the public.
- <http://www.epa.gov/enviroed/grants.html> This grant program is sponsored by the **Environmental Protection Agency**, which supports environmental education projects. These projects enhance the public's awareness, knowledge, and skills to make informed decisions that affect environmental quality.
- [http://www.ocjp.ca.gov/programs/pro\\_jj\\_titlev.htm](http://www.ocjp.ca.gov/programs/pro_jj_titlev.htm) The **Title V program** is designed to prevent youth from entering the juvenile justice system. The Title V Grants Program encourages communities to perform multi-disciplinary assessments of the risks and protection specific to their communities, and then develop community-wide, collaborative plans to prevent delinquency.

- <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wcb/index.html> The **Wildlife Conservation Board's** three main functions are land acquisition, habitat restoration and the development of wildlife oriented public access facilities. The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) acquires real property or rights in real property on behalf of the Department of Fish and Game and can also grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property. All acquisitions are made on a "willing seller" basis pursuant to a fair market value appraisal as approved by the Department of General Services. Acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), with the DFG recommending priorities for proposed acquisitions. Eligible Activities include the creation or retention of jobs for low-income workers. May include loans or loan guarantees to businesses for construction, on-site improvements, equipment purchase, working capital, and site acquisition. May also include loans for business start-ups, grants for publicly owned infrastructure, and loan or grants for small business incubators. Eligible applicants are counties with fewer than 200,000 residents in unincorporated areas and cities with fewer than 50,000 residents that are not participants in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlement program.
- <http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/Grants/> The **California Integrated Waste Management Board** offers a variety of funding opportunities authorized by legislation to assist public and private entities in the safe and effective management of the waste stream. Many local agencies have taken advantage of available grants for playground surface material made from recycled tires.
- <http://www.dbw.ca.gov/grants.html> Each year, the **California Department of Boating and Waterways** provides grants to public agencies throughout the state for construction of launch ramps, boarding floats, shoreside or floating restrooms, shore protection, vehicle/trailer parking, and other boating-related items.
- <http://www.ncrc.nps.gov> The Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) program provides matching grants and technical assistance to economically distressed urban communities. Eligible cities and urban counties can receive rehabilitation, renovation, and planning grants.

The UPARR program was established in November 1978 authorizing \$725 million to provide direct federal assistance to urban localities for rehabilitation of critically needed recreation facilities. The law also encourages systematic local planning and commitment to continuing operation and maintenance of recreation programs, sites, and facilities. Only cities and urban counties meeting established criteria are eligible for assistance.

Although the House-passed version of the appropriation bill included \$30 million for the UPARR grant program and the Senate version proposed \$10 million, Congress passed and the President signed the consolidated appropriations package which eliminated funding for new UPARR grants in FY 2003.

- <http://www.cr.nps.gov> The **National Park Service** administers a number of successful programs promoting historic preservation. These programs can revitalize communities through technical assistance, matching funds and local, state and federal partnerships to preserve and conserve cultural resources.
- <http://endangered.fws.gov/grants/index.html> A variety of tools are available under the **Endangered Species Act** (ESA) to help States, Territories, and landowners plan and implement projects to conserve species. The Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund has been available for several years to provide grants to States and Territories to participate in a wide array of voluntary conservation projects for candidate, proposed and listed species. An additional grant program, the Private Stewardship Program, was funded in fiscal year 2002 through the Land and Water Conservation Fund to respond to the burgeoning interest shown by landowners in managing their lands in ways that benefit species and their habitats.

On this same web site, you will find information on the **National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program** that was established in 1990 to provide matching grants to acquire, restore, manage, or enhance coastal wetlands.

- <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/> This site details the Department of Health and Human Services, **Child Care and Development Fund, Family and Community Violence Prevention Program**, 21 Century Community Learning Centers.

*An important point to remember: Grant-giving organizations, whether public agencies or foundations, are there to give grants – that's what they do. But, they have an underlying reason for giving those grants. When a grant-giving organization selects you to receive a grant, it is because your proposal helps to achieve their purpose, not yours as a grant recipient. As a grantwriter, your job is to show the funding organization how your project will fulfill its mission.*



## 4. Is It Worth It?

Grant seekers usually enter the grantwriting world with questions such as:

- *“What are my chances of getting funded?”*
- *“Is it easier to get government or private foundation grants?”*
- *“What do grant reviewers and agencies look for in a proposal?”*
- *“How do I increase my chances of having my project or program funded by a competitive grant?”*

Another important question to ask is, *“Is it really worth the time and effort to carefully contemplate the grant project, assemble a project team, develop a grant proposal and then, if successful, manage the grant project?”* For the hundreds, and likely thousands of California park and recreation professionals and park advocates who have succeeded in their grantwriting efforts, the answer is a resounding, *“Yes, it really is worth it.”*

Many park and recreation providers know grants are an increasingly important form of financial partnership that should be considered for the success of their programs and park needs. They also know many grant programs require matching funds, have firm timelines and narrow eligibility requirements, and that the process of applying for grants can be very competitive and time consuming. Going after these competitive funds can appear overwhelming for the limited funding sources and dollars available. However difficult the process appears, taking the first step is always the hardest.

*“To be a successful grantwriter, you will have to match your project goals with the program goals of the funder. For example, if you want to submit a grant for recreational programs for children and youth, you might want to consider the Kellogg Foundation because they have a history of funding programs for children and youth. However, you must do your homework to determine if Kellogg will support programs in your community, and if Kellogg will fund the type of support you request and/or the type of program you have developed.”*

*Dr. Beth Kivel,  
Professor, C.S.U., Sacramento  
Recreation and Leisure Studies, 2003.*

*“It is important to stress the pitfall of creating a project to match a funder’s priorities. A wonderful project that is revised to fit a funder’s guidelines will end up diluting the project’s effectiveness. If you have a solid, well-written proposal that presents a compelling case for funding, there will be interested funders out there regardless of the trendiness of your request.”*

*Karen Wilson,  
Executive Director,  
WildCare, 2003.*

## 5. Getting Organized

As mentioned in Chapter 1, writing grant proposals as a means to fund park projects or recreational programs is becoming more and more common to supplement agency and organizational budgets. Agencies make decisions to pursue grants based on strategic planning issues that focus on answering two questions about short and long-term goals:

1. Do we need immediate funding for one or two projects?
2. Do we need to pursue grants for long-term funding for projects that can't be funded through fees or donations? For example, ongoing evaluations of the program, facilities and/or participants.

In the first case above, the organization's administrator often gives the task of finding a grant to a staff member (or volunteer) as an additional assignment. The grant seeker researches potential fund sources and submits a project proposal to the most likely sources of funding—often a number of such sources—hoping that one will stick.

In the second case above, the organization makes a business decision that funding is needed for a number of projects over time and that they have the potential to being successful in obtaining funding for a number of projects if their proposals are researched and well prepared. This organization assigns one or more staff members to pursue grant funding and creates the necessary organizational and logistical structure to get them into the *grants business*.

While either tactic is acceptable and may be successful, the second angle is the focus of this guidebook. In the long-term approach, a necessary first step is for the agency or organization to get themselves prepared to approach the serious business of grant research, grantwriting, and grant administration. Grant funding must fit into your organization's strategic planning and budgeting process. With that in mind, you will also need to consider staffing issues. Specifically, *who* will be responsible for grantwriting and *how much time* and *how many* agency resources will be needed to support this person and this process. Similarly, who will be ready to administer the funds and bring the project forward to completion if the grant is received.

### A. How Ready Am I? – Questions to Consider Before Starting Your Grant Research

Question	Pro	Con
<i>Does my agency or organization need grant funds?</i>	Pro: Grant funds are available to those whose entities can prove they can handle the project, and have a well planned, carefully thought out project, who are successful with their grant proposal.	Con: Grant funds come from another agency or organization and they control how the funds are to be spent.

Question	Pro	Con
<i>Is my agency prepared to do whatever it takes to prepare the grant application?</i>	Pro: An initial investment of staff time and associated resources can leverage larger dollars for a grant project.	Con: Putting together a grant team can be expensive and labor intensive with no guaranteed return.
<i>Can we do the proposal in-house with our staff, and if so, how will we re-negotiate the staff member's other responsibilities; if not, do we have the resources to hire a grantwriter?</i>	Pro: Skilled grantwriters can develop convincing applications relatively quickly. They have experience in knowing where to go for answers, such as CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) and ADA (Americans with Disabilities) compliance. If the grant application is done in-house at your agency, you can control the grant process.	Con: Having sufficient funds to pay for grantwriter services may be a problem. In addition, these consultants may need to be supervised. Grantwriters usually require an upfront fee. The Association of Fundraising Professionals ( <a href="http://www.afpnet.org/">http://www.afpnet.org/</a> ) considers it unethical if a grantwriter collects a percentage of the grant award.
<i>What short and long-term resources will my agency offer to support a grant-writing function of the organization?</i>	Pro: Do you need a full-time grantwriter or can you cross-train an existing staff member to assume the grantwriting responsibility? Remember, grant funds are not <i>free money</i> . To get grants you must be willing to make some kind of up-front investment of time, and often, funds.	Con: Is grant money essential for your expansion plans? Does your agency have a big-ticket need? If so, your grantwriter will be an important player for some time to come.
<i>Can I assemble funds or in-kind services to secure the match requirement?</i>	Pro: Many grants require either a cash or in-kind investment from the applicant. The amount of in-lieu activities allowed as the match, varies with the grant for which you are applying.	Con: The match must be a firm commitment of funds.
<i>If we apply to a foundation and the foundation wants us to have 501(c)(3) status, can we submit the grant through our Friends organization and/or do we have a fiscal agent who will submit the proposal collaboratively with us?</i>	Pro: Yes, that's what <i>Friends</i> are for. Many agencies have founded <i>Friends</i> groups for this purpose. And funders often prefer to operate through a nonprofit organization. If you work through an entity other than your <i>Friends</i> group, get to know your partner well before the grant request is written so you will have confidence and comfort during the entire project process.	Con: Having someone else be the fiscal agent can relieve you of some of the paperwork burden that comes with any grant. But, it adds an extra communications step, which could require more time and effort than you are willing to bear. If you do this, be sure to have a written agreement that spells out the authority, roles, and responsibilities of each party.

## **B. Agency Capacity Questions**

You may find it worthwhile to review these questions with a team of staff, community volunteers, board members, or other individuals who will be working with you to prepare the grant application. The answers to these questions may save you precious time and energy developing the grant proposal.

### **1. Questions for your staff, volunteers, board members**

- Is this project a high priority for your agency and your community?
- Do we have a plan? For example, grant funders want to know how the grant funds will be spent (budget), the project's time period (timeline), and that your project meets the goals of their organization (project scope, benefits and evaluation). They may also want the project to be addressed in your agency's master plan or park general plan.
- Will our proposed project duplicate an existing effort? For example, look elsewhere, such as a public works department, school, nonprofit organization, or a business, to see if someone else has implemented your suggested project.
- Does our agency have competitive advantages over others that will be attractive to potential funders?
- Does our agency have the foundation, administrative and operations staff and infrastructure necessary to operate this project? Often you can include project required equipment purchases or rental costs with the application's budget.
- Who is on the project team, who is the project leader, and who will oversee the grant management if our agency is indeed successful in winning the grant?
- Does our agency have credibility for both managing the project and providing the grant administration?

### **2. Need and Feasibility of Program/Project Idea Questions**

The next step is to decide if it is feasible for your agency to administer the project or program and firm up the project scope to see how it meets the needs of your community. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What specific need does this project satisfy?
- Why should this need be addressed now and not in the future?
- Who will most benefit from your project or program and why? Will

these individuals or groups work with your agency as partners, and if so, in what capacity?

- Who are the partners that will support this project (with funding or in-kind contributions)?
- If you choose to focus primarily on one need or project proposal at this time, will attention to other important needs be postponed, and if so, what are the ramifications for deciding to place this project proposal over another?
- Is it possible to collaborate with another agency or organization if there is an element of duplication?
- How would the community needs be met without a grant?
- Is there any opposition to the project?

### **C. Pursuing Grants – Three Approaches**

Once you have considered these questions and you are ready to move forward in obtaining grant funding, there are three practical approaches you can take (often simultaneously) that will help facilitate the grant acquisition process.

1. Create a *master proposal* and consider submitting parts of the proposal to various funders.
2. Use your proposed project/program ideas to narrow your search for funders. Funders make grants based on geographic location, population (e.g., children and youth, people with disabilities, etc.), types of support (e.g., seed money, capital requests, operating support, etc.) and program/project ideas.
3. Become aware of funding sources available to your organization and identify potential projects for which you will be competitively well-matched.

Developing a master proposal provides the grantwriter with an opportunity to fully develop a proposal (even if the funder only wants a letter of intent). The master proposal can be divided into various sections, tailored to different funding objectives and submitted as a master proposal to various funders. However, it is very important that the same proposal is not submitted to more than one funder at a time. Funders like to know if you are submitting requests to other grantors for different elements of your project. For example, you may ask one agency to fund walkway improvements and another agency to fund interpretive signage and seating areas.

## **D. Link Your Project to the Grantor's Purpose**

Identify potential funders for your projects. Researching potential funders takes time, but the time invested at the front end will allow you to be more effective in developing a fundable proposal. Researching the goals, values and mission of a foundation or government agency is vitally important in order to link your organizational or project objectives to the funding institution's larger purpose. Look at annual reports for examples of other projects they have funded. Select only those donors whose institutional philosophy and programmatic objectives most closely align with your agency.

Also, carefully document submittal requirements including steps, deadlines, format, number of copies, and contact names. Talk with the prospective funder about your project to gain their preliminary perspective. For government grants, read the enabling legislation that created the grant program. The underlying purposes and goals for the grant program will be found there.

## **E. Grantwriting Services**

Freelance grantwriters and/or consultants are professional consultants who are paid for their time and expertise in researching and preparing grant applications. They are hired to assist with developing the project's scope, proposal writing and editing, technical assistance, prospect research and potentially with project management. The Nonprofit Resource Center in Sacramento has a list of professional grantwriters that they share with interested organizations. The Nonprofit Resource Center can be reached at (916)264-2772.

Many local recreation and park agencies and nonprofit groups retain grantwriting services to research and prepare grant applications and have paid for their consulting services with funds from other sources, such as the agency's general fund or through funds collected from a special event. To get referrals for professional grantwriters, contact your colleagues or professional organizations such as the California Park and Recreation Society ([www.cprs.org](http://www.cprs.org)), the California Association of Recreation and Park Districts ([www.carpd.org/](http://www.carpd.org/)), California League of Cities ([www.cacities.org/](http://www.cacities.org/)), or the California Special Districts Association ([www.csda.net/](http://www.csda.net/)).

Grantwriters may be paid either by the hour, by the project or on a retainer or percentage basis, but most grant funders do not allow a grantwriter's fee to be included in the program budget. The Association of Fundraising Professionals (<http://www.afpnet.org/>) considers it unethical if a grantwriter collects a percentage of the grant award.

*“Talking to a staff person at the potential funder’s office when preparing the proposal cannot be over emphasized. When you establish a good rapport with this person, s/he will not lead you astray. S/he will help talk you through the worthiness of the project in question and make suggestions for timing and the amount to request.”*

*Karen Wilson,  
Executive Director,  
WildCare, 2003.*



## 6. Grant Research – Well Worth the Time!

Planning and developing your project before you begin writing a proposal will reduce the time you spend preparing the application. It is tempting to hurry the research and only generally describe your project in order to get on to the more interesting segments of the grant process.

Narrow the focus of your search by linking agencies and organizations that have an interest in your specific subject area. Speak to your colleagues and professional associations, such as your local nonprofit resource center, the California Park and Recreation Society ([www.cprs.org](http://www.cprs.org)) or the California Association of Museums ([www.calmuseums.net](http://www.calmuseums.net)). Also, staff of the Office of Grants and Local Services at the California Department of Parks and Recreation will be able to help you ([Localservices@parks.ca.gov](mailto:Localservices@parks.ca.gov) or [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)). Refer to Appendix A for additional web addresses of interest to the park and recreation profession.

There are four steps involved in identifying potential grant funders:

1. Draft a list of potential funders. Determine what public agencies (federal, state and local), foundations, corporations and community groups have interests and goals similar to those of your entity.
2. Refine the list to include agencies (and divisions) that provide the support you need or who are most likely to fund projects in your subject field or geographic area. Identify the project and/or program officer from a foundation who oversees your particular area of interest. Some officers focus on health, others focus on community development, etc. It is good to narrow the search based on population (e.g., youth, seniors), and type of support (e.g., seed money, capital development, etc.) offered.
3. Become familiar with the funder's goals, mission statement, board of directors, assets, application procedures and their most recently funded projects.
4. Create and use a list of keywords and phrases associated with the project for which you are seeking funds, for example *urban forest*, *wildlife corridor*, *stream restoration*, *multi-use trail*, *conservation easements* or *cultural preserve* and match them to #3 above. This will save time when performing Internet searches.

Consider developing a notebook or spreadsheet of potential funders that would include: funder name, project officer or contact, address, phone, fax number, email address, board of directors, names of key staff members, financial assets, and their funding history.

## **A. Ask Around – Talk to Your Colleagues and Past Grantees**

Check with other park and recreation providers, community groups or nonprofit organizations that have similar thoughts on locating funding, and who have called about funding a particular project or program. Speak to the funding agency project officer directly. Ask for a list of recently funded projects and the contact information. Contact the grant recipient and speak to the project director or the person who wrote the grant proposal. Indicate where you got their name and ask questions that will assist you in learning about the funding source. For example:

- What would they do differently next time? It's always a good idea to find out what they learned from the positive experience of getting a grant. They will likely have suggestions about things that they would do next time to strengthen a proposal.
- Did they call or visit the grant project officer prior to preparing the proposal? This will provide a strong indication as to what extent your colleague engaged in contact and what you should do.
- Who at the funding agency did they find most helpful? This will help you identify an agency staff person who would be receptive to being contacted.
- Did they use any special advocates on their behalf such as a volunteer organization representative or a board member? This will tell you what role, if any, advocates played in securing the grant funds.
- Did the granting agency review a draft or outline of the proposal? This will provide you an indication of the granting agency's receptivity for project or program review and general project assistance.
- What would they suggest as helpful hints to prepare a successful grant application? Certainly this will help you plan your time and efforts in carefully developing the various components of the grant application.
- Did they have a site visit by a project officer prior to their submitting the grant proposal? If one occurred, ask what took place, who attended, how long the visit lasted, and with whom did they speak.
- Did they receive the full grant request? Identify the extent to which budget negotiations (if any) took place. It will also shed light on what they included (and was funded) in their budget calculations.

#### Additional Questions:

- What types of entities do these grant funders tend to support?
- Is the amount you are requesting within the parameters indicated by the granting agency?
- Is a match required? If so, does my agency have sufficient funds for the match?
- What are the application requirements?
- Is the grant on a reimbursable basis? Will it be a problem for my agency to front-end or pay ahead of time for expenses related to the grant project?
- Does the funder have application deadlines or does it review proposals continuously?
- How long is the funding cycle?

## B. The Remarkable Internet

The Internet is a fund-raising frontier that benefits many local recreation and park agencies, districts, and nonprofit grant seekers. It offers sites that provide advice to grantwriters at little or no cost, but it can eat up valuable time if you do not know where to begin. Sites available to grant seekers include TechSoup <http://www.techsoup.org/>, N-Power <http://www.npowermichigan.org/>, Coyote Communications, <http://www.coyotecom.com/tips.html>, GuideStar, <http://www.guidestar.org/> and Network for Good, [http://www.comsearch.net/usa\\_states/ca\\_california/](http://www.comsearch.net/usa_states/ca_california/).

Using a search engine such as Google, <http://www.google.com/>, Ask Jeeves, <http://www.ask.com/> or Yahoo, <http://www.yahoo.com/> to begin your research is a sure way to begin exploring funding sources. Typing the name of the agency or organization will locate their web site. Once at the agency's web site, look for links, or find tabs that allow you to locate their grants section. Remember that an important first step in matching your project with the potential funding source is to view the agency's or organization's mission statement. Suggested key search words include: Grant Proposal, Foundation Grants, Government Grants, Corporate Grants, Grantsmanship, Grant Seekers, and Grant Research.

GuideStar Newsletter's ([http://www.guidestar.org/news/newsletter/archive/feb\\_2003.html](http://www.guidestar.org/news/newsletter/archive/feb_2003.html)) editor Patrick Ferraro, Philanthropic Research, Inc.© advises nonprofit organizations on *Online-fundraising: Some Do's and Don'ts*. GuideStar is the registered trademark and operating name of Philanthropic Research, Inc. a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. GuideStar has the 990PF form for many private foundations which lists which agencies or organizations were recently funded.

## C. Foundation Centers and Library Resources

Park, recreation, leisure, and open space providers have traditionally looked to public entities to fund their grant proposals, yet more and more grantwriters are seeking foundation support. The Foundation Center is a highly respected resource for obtaining information on foundations through its publications. The Foundation Center Library operates an extensive network of libraries that are open to the public. Its headquarters is in New York City and there are reference sites in Washington, D.C., Cleveland, Ohio, and San Fran-

cisco, California. In addition, the Center has a relationship with many libraries throughout the country. Three of the Center's most useful publications can be found on (<http://lnp.fdncenter.org/finder.html>)

- *The Foundation Directory*. The *Directory* is an up-to-date reference guide to 10,000 major foundations and funding sources. The *Directory* lists foundations with assets of \$1 million or more and those awarding \$100,000 annually or more a year. Listings are indexed according to fields of interest and geographical location.
- *The National Data Book of Foundations: A Comprehensive Guide to Grantmaking Foundations*. This book is a complete guide to foundation giving. With briefer entries than the *Directory*, the *Data Book* lists more than 27,000 foundations filing with the Internal Revenue Service. This directory provides names of foundations, amounts granted, addresses, and contacts. A geographic listing helps grant seekers find nationwide foundations and community foundations that may provide grant funds in localities near yours.
- *The Foundation Grants Index, CD ROM Version 4.0, December 2003*. Many proposal writers like this publication because it describes more than 125,000 grants made by approximately 1,000 of the largest foundations that fund minimum \$10,000 grants. The *Index* is a source for identifying *who got funded*, the *types* of projects that were funded and the amounts that were granted by various funders. The Foundation Grants Index also publishes the *Foundation Grants Index Bimonthly Newsletter*, which lists recent grants and can be found online.
- *The FC Search CD-ROM database* [http://fdncenter.org/learn/classroom/fcsearch\\_tour/](http://fdncenter.org/learn/classroom/fcsearch_tour/) includes profiles on over 53,000 grantmakers and 200,000 grant listings with an easy searching interface. The 21 search fields include grantmaker name, grantmaker state, grantmaker city, grantmaker type, geographic focus, establishment date, fields of interest, types of support, total assets, total giving, corporate name, corporate location, text search, trustees, officers, donors, recipient name, recipient state, recipient city, recipient type, subjects, grant amount, and authorization year. *FC Search* is currently the best database for foundation prospect identification. However like all commercial funding databases and print directories, the resource has serious limitations: only approximately 40% of the listed funders voluntarily answered a questionnaire to clarify their funding interests. Entries are outdated, with the Year 2000 version containing fiscal information from 1997 and 1996. *FC Search* only includes grant award examples from a single fiscal year, so it is difficult to track giving patterns over time. Geographic parameters can be frustrating. For example, California is so large that statewide hits go far beyond geographic region, but using the name of a small town in a keyword search is pointless.

## D. Useful Electronic and Print Resources

- For basic statistics on giving, you might try the Internet site of the *American Association of Fund-Raising Counsel (AAFRC)*, Trust for Philanthropy (<http://www.aafrc.org>), publishers of Giving USA.
- California Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Grants and Local Services, ([www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov))
- Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, *Appendix VI: Developing and Writing Grant Proposals*, (<http://www.aspe.hhs.gov/cfda>). This is a government-wide compendium of all-1,499 federal programs, projects, services, and activities that provide assistance or benefits to the American public. These programs provide grants, loans, loan guarantees, services, information, scholarships, training, insurance, etc., to millions of Americans every day.
- Statistical Abstract of the United States (<http://www.census.gov/statab/www>) produced by the U.S. Census Bureau, features some statistical information of interest to governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations.
- The Foundation Center maintains and regularly updates a free online resource that provides users with ready access to a wealth of statistical data on U.S. private and community foundations and their funding patterns. There are four distinct directories of annotated links to more than 2,000 grant providers web sites (<http://fdncenter.org/funders/grantmaker>).
- This web page contains several common grant application formats that have been adopted by groups of grantmakers to allow grant applicants to produce a single proposal for a specific community of funders (<http://fdncenter.org/funders/cga/index.html>).
- Fundsnet Online Services is a privately owned Web site created in 1996 for the purpose of providing Nonprofit Organizations, Colleges and Universities with information on financial resources available on the Internet <http://www.fimdsnetservices.com>.
- “Where Can I Find Examples of Grant Proposals?”, The Foundation Center, (<http://www.fdncenter.org/learn/faqs/propsample.html>).
- Grantproposal.com (<http://www.grantproposal.com>) is devoted to providing free resources for both advanced grantwriters and inexperienced grant seekers.
- The Grantsmanship Center (TGCI) (<http://www.tgci.com>) was founded in 1972 to offer grantsmanship training and low-cost publications to nonprofit organizations and government agencies. On this web site

you will find a variety of grantwriting resources, as well as successful grant applications that can be purchased for review.

- The Independent Sector (<http://www.independentsector.org>) has a research section on its site including some statistical summaries.
- Miner, Lynn E., Director, Research and Sponsored Programs, Marquette University, *A Guide to Proposal Planning and Writing*, [www.uvm.edu](http://www.uvm.edu).
- The web site [http://e-services.ims.gov/project\\_planning/](http://e-services.ims.gov/project_planning/) is a tutorial designed for museums, libraries, and related organizations that are applying for National Leadership Grants (NLG). The purpose is to provide the skills, knowledge, and tools necessary for developing a good project plan.
- The Urban Institute (<http://www.urban.org>) in Washington, D.C also maintains databases related to charitable statistics, including its special project, the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS) site (<http://nccs.urban.org/data.html>).
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), *Tips for Developing Successful Grant Applications*, 2003, [www.epa.gov/enviroed/granttips](http://www.epa.gov/enviroed/granttips). This is a really easy to follow document that explains helpful hints for organizations that submit applications for environmental education grants awarded by the EPA.
- Barbato, Joseph, and Danielle S. *Writing for A Good Cause: The Complete Guide to Crafting Proposals and other Persuasive Pieces for Nonprofits*. New York, NY; Simon and Schuster, 2000.
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## 7. Watch For These Hot Topics

Depending on your funding needs, it could be helpful to be aware of these “hot button” issues that garner the most attention from funders. Six trends or hot topics to consider are:

### A. Obesity

*“Youth obesity is out of control” according to the Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity. Approximately 300,000 U.S. deaths annually are associated with obesity and overweight populations (compared with 400,000 related to cigarette smoking). According to the Surgeon General, “a staggering 61 percent of U.S. adults and 13 percent of children and adolescents are obese.” The report further states, “The costs associated with populations that are overweight and obese were estimated to be \$117 billion in 2000. Obesity contributes to 300,000 premature deaths per year. Less than 1/3 of Americans engage in a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate physical activity at least five days a week.”*

The federal Center for Disease Control (CDC) says youth obesity and physical inactivity are epidemic and that data indicates the percentage of children and adolescents who are overweight has doubled over the past 20 years. The growth in obesity rates is linked to poor nutrition and physical inactivity. Currently, twenty-nine percent of U.S. children participate in daily physical-education classes compared with 42 percent in 1991. If left unchecked, the CDC indicates that youth obesity will lead to increased chronic health problems

*“We have an obesity epidemic nationally and in California. Persuading Californians to adopt healthy behaviors will require a variety of methods and strategies. Park and recreation agencies are well positioned to assume a leadership role in improving the health of their constituents. This is due to the number of natural and physical resources public agencies manage and operate; their leadership and visibility within their communities; and the number of residents who access our programs, parks, facilities, and services.”*

*Jane Adams, Executive Director,  
California Park & Recreation Society*

for many people later in life, as well as higher health costs. The CDC has launched a nationwide anti-obesity media campaign targeting youth ages 9-13.

As providers of safe, supervised recreation programs and operators of park facilities, a natural link to assisting in the reduction of this national epidemic is apparent. Our profession can be part of the solution – meaning if we position ourselves to be providers of activities and operators of facilities, we can offer healthy lifestyle alternatives. Savvy park and recreation grantwriters know it is possible that evaluators may be given instructions to look for certain characteristics or grading factors related to exercise, education or the promotion of healthy alternatives.

### B. Terrorism and Homeland Security

Top priorities for the public are homeland security and safety from terrorism. Many people



are choosing to travel shorter distances in pursuit of leisure time activities. Unconfirmed media reports identify national treasures such as Yosemite as symbolic terrorist targets, which may encourage people to seek local recreation and park pursuits rather than plan lengthy trips to far-away destinations. As a result, local park and recreation service providers have seen increased visitation and program participation since the September 11<sup>th</sup> (2001) attack. According to the California Park & Recreation Society, agency administrators report that this increase in park usage is leading to larger operating costs during California's worse budget crisis. Thus, administrators and policymakers are struggling to manage increased usage with decreased revenues.

Knowledgeable park and recreation professionals can promote safe and secure local facilities that focus on family togetherness, as destinations for leisure pursuits.

### **C. At-Risk Youth Mentoring: Before and After School Programs**

Park and recreation services and professionals are part of the solution through their ability to provide quality before and after school programs for youth. Park facilities and recreation programs such as skateboard parks, climbing walls, midnight team leagues, youth drama programs and homework clubs offer positive alternatives to youth boredom.

As evident from the passing of Proposition 49, the *After School Education and Safety Program Act of 2002*, [www.joinarnold.com](http://www.joinarnold.com) the public wants kids to have safe, supervised and fun activities before and after school. Proposition 49 promises (no earlier than 2007) to dramatically increase funding for every public elementary and middle school and to open funding to after-school programs operated by community-based organizations located off school grounds.

Grant funds are potentially available for park and recreation agencies (city, county, and districts) or nonprofit organizations like the YMCA [www.ymca.net/index.jsp](http://www.ymca.net/index.jsp) in partnership with school districts to apply for before and after school enrichment care and activities through the Department of Education. For more information check out [www.cde.ca.gov/search/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/search/) or [www.cde.ca.gov/afterschool/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/afterschool/).

### **D. Vanishing Landscapes**

The growth and success of land trusts is a vivid sign of the public's deep concern about the loss of land to development. *"Nonprofit land trusts have succeeded as no other organizations in protecting open spaces threatened by the sprawling, haphazard development that is eating away landscapes we once took for granted,"* according to Jean Hocker, former President of Land Trust Alliance.

Local and regional land trusts have

*"As public decision makers craft their (land use) plans, we hope they will take full advantage of the knowledge and experience of land trusts: their skill in using a range of land conservation tools, their sensitivity to local conditions and needs, and their innovation in bringing people together to resolve differences. Land trusts can be invaluable partners with their public colleagues in conserving open space."*

*Jean Hocker, former President,  
Land Trust Alliance, February 1999*



protected 4.7 million acres of open space in thousands of communities where their local presence allows them to know the land and the landowners personally. Land trusts preserve land in several ways depending upon the nature of the land to be preserved and the needs of project partners, specifically landowners. The goal of many land trusts is to create a *win-win* scenario whereby willing landowners meet their personal and financial goals while preserving their land for future generations.

Tax benefits create strong incentives for landowners to preserve their land. Federal and state taxes may be reduced by the donation of land or the rights to develop land. When the donation of land to a qualified nonprofit results in preservation of the land in perpetuity, the donor may see significant tax reductions, even up to the full value of the donation.

Park and recreation professionals recognize the long overdue public investment in open space and can work effectively with land trusts to preserve, protect, and manage these lands.

## **E. Graying of Californians**

A long-term trend many park and recreation professionals are thinking about is the huge increase of older Californians projected during the next 40 years. At the beginning of the century, less than four percent of the U.S. population was 65 or older. Today, California is home to the largest elderly population in the country, 10 percent more than Florida, which has the next greatest number. In the next 40 years, the number of Californians age 60 and over is projected to grow by 154 percent. By 2010, 1 in 5 Californians will be age 60 or over.

This older population is likely to have higher education levels and incomes, and according to the Bureau of Census, they will likely be in better health. As our population ages and becomes more ethnically and culturally diverse, recreation programs and park facilities will increasingly need to be reviewed for relevancy.

In the summer 2003 issue of *California Parks and Recreation*, authors Marti Smiley Childs and Jeff March report, *“Seniors have lots of interest in public garden spaces and walking. They like to know how far they walked, so for some parks we’ve designed combinations of walking loops around the perimeter, with distance markers along the way.”* Childs and March continue, *“Encouraging seniors to visit parks yields an added benefit: they tend to observe and report problems to authorities. With thoughtful, innovative approaches, parks can indeed respond to the evolving needs of contemporary society.”*

## **F. Population Growth**

Rapid population growth drives recreation demand. Demand will continue to be high for traditional outdoor recreation activities and programs such as walking for pleasure, beach play and picnicking. Generally, Californians spend most of their time participating in activities that are not very expensive, require little specialized equipment, and need few specialized skills.

## Top 15 Activities Ranked In Order of Participation

Percentage of Californians who reported participating at least a portion of one day in 2002 in each of 55 outdoor recreation activities. (From the **Public Opinions and Attitude Survey 2002** conducted by the California Department of Parks and Recreation)

Activity	Percentage of Participants
1. Walking for fitness and fun	91.1
2. Driving for pleasure, sightseeing	90.2
3. Visiting historic or cultural sites, museums	85.5
4. Attending outdoor cultural events (festivals, fairs, concerts, etc.)	82.6
5. Beach activities, surf play	82.2
6. Visiting outdoor nature museums, zoos or arboretums	80.1
7. Picnicking in developed sites	76.7
8. Wildlife viewing, bird watching, viewing natural scenery	75.1
9. Trail hiking	68.7
10. Using open turf areas (casual and unstructured activities)	65.5
11. Pool swimming	59.5
12. Camping in developed sites with facilities - toilets, tables, etc.	49.8
13. Swimming in freshwater lakes, rivers and/or streams	46.7
14. Bicycling on paved surfaces	45.8
15. Walking a pet	43.5

There is increasing interest in a range of adventure or *adrenaline-high* activities, such as mountain biking, whitewater rafting, paintball games, ultra-light flying, trail-surfing, and kite-surfing. Included in *adrenaline-high* activities are those perceived to be high-risk, including rock climbing, bungee jumping, and hang-gliding. There is also rapid growth in motorized recreational activities including off-road motorcycles, all terrain vehicles (ATVs), and dune buggies. The number of registered off-highway vehicles in California increased 108 percent between 1980 and 2001, while the number of street licensed four-wheel drive vehicles increased 74 percent between 1994 and 2001. High-tech recreation activities and gadgets such as geo-caching, or cell phones/games or advances in equipment for Nordic skiing, snow shoeing, kayaking, skate boarding and mountain biking are expanding the range and variety of leisure time pursuits. Grant requests related to these activities should demonstrate to the grant provider that the agency is seeking to stay ahead of the curve, rather than playing catch up.

Administrators will want to ask board members, staff members, commissioners, and community groups if existing facilities are meeting the needs of the populations they serve. For example, one agency in Sacramento County is exploring how existing turf fields can be used for lacrosse to serve the recreational needs of a new Samoan population; another is investigating lawn bowling for a neighborhood seniors group; and yet another agency in northern California is investigating including a disc golf site in an oak woodland.

## 8. Time to Get Moving! – Developing the Project

First, take time to review the grant application requirements carefully. Ask yourself, “Does the scope of my project genuinely fit the criteria for this grant?” or are you trying to mold your project to fit the granting agency’s program goals? Either way, look closely at the requirements: the time frame, budgets, and project restrictions. Is there a match requirement, and if so, what is acceptable? Can the match be in-lieu contributions, e. g., planning, project management, volunteer labor, and design? Ask yourself if your agency is able to afford front-end costs for the project knowing the grant operates primarily through reimbursements. Many grant contracts require a statement of commitment that requires your agency to commit to manage and protect the project either in perpetuity or for an extended period of time.

The best thing to remember is to put yourself in the place of the grant reader and ask, “Does this make sense, is it clear, is it relevant, is there enough detail?” Craft the application for someone who may not be familiar with your project or know how important it is. This will help you write a convincing proposal.

Be clear and concise. Remember that reviewers may be reading over 100 applications, each with as much hope and enthusiasm as yours. If you repeat yourself, you run the risk of losing their interest and what could be a few critical scoring points.

*“Preparing a grant application is much like doing a college term paper – follow all of the directions clearly and succinctly and document your assertions.”*

*Ken McKowen, Trails Manager  
Department of Parks and Recreation*

### A. Must-Know Tips Before You Begin

#### 1. Alignment

Customize your submission to fit the grant maker’s philosophy. Use the same terms in your proposal as the granting agency uses in its mission statement, scoring criteria and program goals. When the grantor is reviewing a grant application, catch phrases and buzzwords are important. Be aware that the grant reader will look for them. By doing your homework, you will be better able to align your project’s description with the granting entity’s mission statement.

If the grant program is funded by government, start by reviewing the legislation that created the program. The enabling legislation describes the targeted end-user or types of facilities contemplated. Important terms or phrases found in the enabling legislation should be incorporated into your grant proposal where possible without appearing contrived.

Too often, grantwriters do not follow directions outlined in the grant application guidelines and submit requests for items outside of the grant program parameters. For example, if the granting agency indicates it will not accept applications that include requests for planning

or for administrative costs, by all means do not include them. If the guidelines say they will fund projects up to \$50,000, do not ask for \$75,000 unless requested to do so.

## **2. Probe**

Speak to a grant officer who will act as a liaison between your agency and the granting agency. Find out if your proposal meets the organization's criteria, take suggestions to heart, and incorporate recommendations into your proposal, if possible. Asking for clarity from a grant officer is a good idea and will ultimately save you lots of time. The grant officer has knowledge of many different projects; some perhaps the same size and with similar demographics as yours. He/she is keenly aware of funding parameters and can assist in determining whether or not your project falls within the funding guidelines.

Small suggestions offered by a project officer could make major differences in the final form and focus of your submitted proposal. Foundations and governmental agency staff appreciate those who take the time to gather facts while preparing a grant proposal. When speaking to your project officer, ask about letters of support. Generally, it is not the number of support letters that impresses the project officer, but the commitment demonstrated by the letters that matters.

## **3. Readiness**

Demonstrate in your narrative that the project is ready to move forward as soon as funding is awarded. Show that the project can be completed in a timely manner; grant providers want to see results. Communicate that you have the resources

needed to complete the project on time and as described in your proposal.

## **4. Be Concise**

Proposals should be succinct, easy to read and understand, and should be presented in an exciting, yet clearly defined manner. If written well, the proposal should lead from one interesting idea to the next. Build on the reader's enthusiasm for the project by leading them through the measurable steps of the project's evolution. However, keep the grant proposal to the number of pages allowed.

## **5. Generate Curiosity**

Align the project's name with the grant program's purpose. Consider giving the project a catchy name, like *Shoot for the Moon*, *Slam-Dunk – a Winning Youth Girls Basketball Program*, or *Bridges to Healthy Living for Youth* which also provides a descriptive clue. The project name can provide a first impression and a memorable theme, which can be very helpful during the scoring process.

### **Words to the Wise...**

- Granting agencies generally do not want funds tied up for years while the applicant seeks matching or other funding sources.
- Go for the most secure funding and with this in-hand, seek additional funding sources.
- Look long-range, get one or two small successes under your belt to show credibility before seeking funds for a relatively big project.
- Funders are looking for proposals that demonstrate project readiness, have strong community support, and are consistent with long range planning.

## 6. Sustainability

Grant reviewers will be reading your proposal carefully to see if your project can be sustained. They want to be assured that their limited funds are going to projects that will be continued and make a lasting difference. Be clear that your agency will continue the project in future years.

## 7. Role Model

Show how your project addresses a major regional or statewide issue and will become a successful model to be replicated; describe a specific strategy for broadly sharing your solution.

## 8. Promote the Project's Successes

Include offers to distribute articles, conduct conference presentations, and submit press releases. Be sure to mention the funders publicly.

## 9. Be Realistic

Be realistic with your budget. A red flag to grant evaluators is an overly ambitious budget. It is better to limit the proposal to fewer, more realistic goals than to promise more than can be delivered. Many proposals significantly underestimate funding for staff time.

## 10. Partnering

Identifying partners shows that your project has strong support. You will want to choose your project partners carefully. The more partners you have, the harder it is to keep everyone informed and working together, particularly where large sums of money must be managed. If you plan to work with partners for years, they should be agencies you trust, have a proven track record, a history of success and offer a good working relationship.

Grant readers will look closely at the partners, their levels of contribution, and the overall framework for project management. Consider carefully who you include for a share of the funding to gain additional support for the project and be sure to include letters of agreement or memorandums of understanding confirming the partnership. As a general rule, nonprofit partners bring substantial political support and public visibility; public agencies bring additional project management and accountability.

Grant readers will review applications to understand the roles of project partners. For example, a grant evaluator may favorably look at the variety or number of regional partners included in a proposal for an important regional trail connector, and it may help your project be more memorable to the grant evaluator. Conversely, if there is opposition to the

*"For the novice grantwriter, do not be intimidated by the formal sounding instructions in the grant application – you're not alone; many other grantwriters have felt overwhelmed, too – educate yourself, follow the program's directions, seek alignment between the request and the goal of the grant program, and ask questions of the grant administrator or project officer."*

*Patrice Cox,  
Professional Grantwriter*

project, it is important to honestly represent the concerns. Bridges will surely be burned if funds are awarded for a project that the community does not support.

### **11. Be Complete**

Be thorough and concise, but keep to the length of the application as indicated in the grant guidelines. Make sure your application is being submitted as a 'completed' document. So many times, grant applications are turned in incomplete, resulting in their immediate rejection, or it can make or break a tie score when it comes time for your proposal to be evaluated. Anticipate and provide, if required, environmental documents, letters, and resolutions of support, maps, and photographs.

Reviewing stacks of proposals can be a difficult and time-consuming job for grant readers. Reviewers learn quickly to scan the proposal narrative in an attempt to get a fast overview of exactly what you expect to do, with whom, when you want to do it, why you want to do it, how it will be done, where it will take place, and toward what measurable outcome. If you are short and to the point, and you have clearly answered the application questions, your grant will be viewed as comprehensible and able to be funded. If the proposal is rambling or provides material that is not relevant or needed, the reader may have a hard time justifying the award of points based on the ranking criteria.

### **12. Support**

If you have questions or would like clarification about how to document the level of participation and support from community interests, be sure to ask the project officer for assistance. Grant evaluators may very well look for the breadth, depth, and scope of community support indicated in your application rather than the number of letters cheering on the projects.

### **13. Link Your Project to the Grantor's Mission**

It is essential to the success of your grant that you customize the application proposal to fit closely with the philosophy and mission of the grant funder. Use the same or very similar terms in your proposal as used in the granting organization's mission statement and/or in its guidelines. By doing your homework, you may be able to align your project description with the granting agency's mission statement and philosophy.

### **14. Link Your Project Proposal to Current Trends**

Frequently, when societal issues are featured in the media and elevated to the state legislature, new legislation is passed or funding is authorized to address the issue. Savvy park and recreation service providers should stay current with societal trends receiving media and legislative attention because these issues are foremost on the minds of decision makers. For example, the legislature may instruct evaluators to review new grant applications for signs of health trends related to youth obesity or solving air quality concerns.

Ask yourself, *why is this (grant) project or program relevant to the community?* For example, your grant project involves the construction of a trail in the vicinity of a high school. Consider partnering with instructors at the school or through a school's volunteer programs such as Key Club or ROTC and engage them to assist in the trail construction. In preparing your grant proposal, indicate that your agency is partnering with the school's students and faculty and that the construction will be labor intensive and will require x number of hours

to complete. Link back to the activity that will take place and mention that students will receive physical education credits for participating in the trail construction. This will indicate to the grant reader that your agency is actively engaged with the community's youth and the school's mission of providing healthy, outdoor volunteer experiences.

It is always a good idea to speak to your project officer to ask for clarification, but a wise grantwriter knows that if they are able to tie their project to a current issue without reducing the original intent of the grant project, their grant application may score higher.

*“Regarding the State Railroad Museum:  
“The Governor (Reagan) was sitting directly  
across from me, and we talked about the  
railroad museum, the history and  
importance of railroading and the pieces  
that had been restored. He didn’t seem to  
be real excited about it and I thought, well,  
we aren’t making much headway. ...he  
began to talk about how as a boy he’d  
always wanted to be a tramp on the  
railroad. He even said he’d talked to a  
tramp one time about including the man’s  
story in a picture. He got onto this subject  
and talked for maybe an hour about this  
sort of thing. After the dinner, he said, ‘I  
think you’ve got a good idea here. I will  
support it.’ Back at the office the next day, I  
wrote him a letter to remind him. Well,  
needless to say, we got the money.”*

*William Penn Mott,  
Prophet of the Parks:  
The Story of William Penn Mott, Jr.,  
Mary Ellen Butler, page 120.*

*The proposal summary is the cornerstone of your grant application. The initial impression it provides is critical to the success of your project. In many cases, the summary is the first part of the proposal package to be reviewed by a project officer or an agency representative. It may be the only part of the entire grant package that is carefully scrutinized before a decision is made to consider the project any further.*



## 9. Writing Your Proposal

A foundation or government agency usually has very specific requirements as to what a proposal should contain and how it should be presented. This information may be found in the donor's annual report, on its website, newsletter, or in other publications. Most governmental grant providers publish specific grant applications and guidelines for each grant program they administer. Above all, follow directions, address the project criteria, include the environmental documents, pictures, maps, support letters, and other required attachments, and identify the project partner's match sources. And, very importantly, be prepared to show the community's support for the project.

The successful grant proposal is one that presents the project thoughtfully, is well planned, is concisely packaged, and has clear, specific and measurable objectives. It is a very good idea for the grant applicant to become familiar with all of the program criteria related to the program and, when in doubt, contact the grant project officer for clarification.

### A. Elements of Winning Proposals

Developing the necessary skills to write successful proposals is not difficult, even if you are relatively new at grantwriting. Knowing where to begin is half the game. Here are a dozen pointers to help you develop a winning proposal:

1. Winning proposals are prepared in a positive and upbeat style. Some novice grantwriters think that if you describe how desperate a situation is, a granting agency will throw money at you to solve the problem. This is just not the case. Grantors hedge their bets by supporting proposals that describe worthwhile programs that meet identified community and agency needs and match the criteria indicated by the granting agency. Use action verbs, for example 'we create' instead of 'we have been creating'. Use variety in your writing, such as not starting every sentence with 'The.'
2. Winning proposals assume the reader knows nothing about the subject and your organization. Clearly describe what the agency project or program will do and what it means to the community. Use a real-life scenario for the grant proposal reader. Use effective photos or other visuals. The reader must have a clear mental picture of what it is you intend to do. They are looking for a well coordinated, problem-solving project or program.
3. Winning proposals have clearly defined and documented needs and succinctly describe how those needs were identified and how they will be met. Use examples, quotes, facts, and personal narratives.
4. They don't overuse professional jargon, acronyms, or bureaucratic expressions. Terms that are known to a specific profession may have

dissimilar connotations to the grant reader. For example, 'park general plan' and 'park master plan' may indicate something completely different to a governmental agency grant reader. Again, by speaking to a project officer beforehand you may save a tremendous amount of time in the long run clarifying your project's intent.

5. They follow all the guidelines specified in the grant application document. If a scoring criteria or evaluation checklist is provided, by all means, write to the criteria! Use the application headings from the guidelines or the Request for Proposal format in your proposal.
6. They present the material in a reasonable, systematic and efficient manner. Sections are clearly identified, and a parallel structure is maintained. Each need has a coordinated, measurable objective, activity, and evaluation statement.
7. They provide well-explained, realistic budget summaries that consistently match the proposed program criteria and timeline, and provide at or above the funding match requirements. Be careful not to include items in the proposed budget such as planning or administrative overhead, which may not be allowable expenses.
8. They can be used as models from which other agencies can learn. Grant funders want other agencies or organizations to learn from your project or program, and want to share your successes and knowledge with others. Your winning proposal will be held in high regard as a model to replicate.
9. They are uncluttered and professional looking. They are word-processed (preferably 12-point font), grammatically and mathematically correct, and are presented in a simple cover per the application guidelines. They are not presented in colorful, fancy binders with different fonts. Instead, winning proposals use the prescribed font size and number of pages. Use at least one-inch margins around each page. Provide the grant funder with a signed original and the number of copies requested. Remember to sign in blue ink; this way the original can be clearly distinguished from copies.
10. They are as long as necessary to answer clearly each question in the grant application guidelines, but not rambling. Refer to the evaluation

*"Try reading what you have written out loud; it's a great way to catch run-on or awkwardly written sentences. Also, have someone who knows nothing about the project read your proposal to see if it makes sense to them. Often they will catch sections that need clarification or seem redundant."*

*Jan Stohr, Executive Director,  
Nonprofit Resource Center,  
Sacramento, CA.*

criteria to determine length. A heavily weighted section may require more pages than that of a lesser scored section.

11. They contain graphics and pictures that capture both the image and substance of the proposal. Include photos that contribute value to your request and those that help clarify the proposal where appropriate. Maps that are large and fold out can be problematic, but sometimes a schematic drawing is helpful. Grant readers often photocopy pages from grant requests, and cumbersome drawings and pullout maps are hard to photocopy.
12. They are bound in a manner easy for the grant reader to pull apart and reassemble. Having each page numbered will also help the project officer.

**Key elements of most grant applications:**

- ❑ Cover letter
- ❑ Summary of your proposed project
- ❑ Introduction of your agency or organization
- ❑ Description of what issue will be addressed (the needs statement)
- ❑ Description of the expected outcome
- ❑ Description of what method or approach you will use
- ❑ Evaluation (process and outcome)
- ❑ Project budget
- ❑ Attachments (remember: a picture is worth a million words)

## 10. The Fundamental Elements of Successful Proposals

With any good proposal you will want to stay on top of deadlines and you will want to carefully follow submittal guidelines. Grant application requirements may vary with programs and with funders. If you have questions, by all means, call or meet with the project officer for clarification.

### A. The Cover Letter

The purpose of the cover letter is to grab the grant reader's attention by briefly describing your request and the amount of money you are seeking. Request a follow-up meeting with a grant officer or foundation official to discuss your project in greater detail. The cover letter should be no longer than one page and be signed by the applicant's director or chair of the governing authority. If the foundation requests a letter proposal, it is not necessary to include a cover letter. Remember to include your agency or organization's telephone and fax numbers and email address. The cover letter also provides an opportunity for the grant seeker to highlight relationships with key members of their board and possibly the grantor.

### B. The Proposal Summary or Abstract

The summary is the first piece of the proposal the reviewer will read that fully describes the scope of the project or program being proposed. After writing the full grant proposal, you will want to develop the summary. It should provide a clear picture of the project to the reader. It should describe the 'who,' 'what,' 'where,' 'when,' 'why,' and 'how' of the project in concise, compelling and easy to follow sentences. The summary should also include an overview of the project's timeline, budget requirements, and a statement related to the community's support for the project. It could be in a form of a cover letter or part of the grant application itself, and should be no longer than half a page. It may also include a drawing or brief schematic map to help clarify your project's steps.

Remember in crafting your project proposal, clarity is valued more than weight. Don't try to cram too much into what should be a brief summary. Your goal, in a brief space, is to capture the attention of the grant-giver, paint a mental picture of the completed project, and convey the impression that you have the necessary means, with their assistance, to bring a highly needed and valued project to completion.

Before getting into the summary component or other elements of your proposal, you will want to answer these prodding-type questions to develop a firm project planning foundation. Your answers will assist you in preparing the key elements of most grant applications and help you to focus more specifically on the project.

#### WHO?

- Who is your targeted audience or beneficiaries?
- What is the geographic location and boundaries of the beneficiaries?
- What are the demographic characteristics of the population who will benefit from the activity, project or program?
- Who will be the project partners or co-sponsors?

- Who else is contributing financially or in-lieu and what will their roles be?
- Who opposes the project and why?
- Who has supported or expressed an interest in your organization's programs (e.g., past and current funders, members of the board of directors, volunteers, community leaders)?

#### WHAT?

- What problem or need are you addressing?
- What is the central purpose to the activity for which you are seeking funding?
- What is the focus of the activity, program or project?
- What are your desired results? How will the program participants benefit?
- What is the total budget and what is your timeline?
- What are the unique qualifications of your organization and/or staff to accomplish the proposed activity, project, or program?
- What are the program's activities? Will you charge fees?
- What type of support (e.g., capital improvements, renovation, operating support, equipment) are you seeking?

#### WHEN?

- When will it be started and when will it be completed?
- When is it needed?
- When will the work, with key milestones, actually occur?

#### WHERE?

- Where is the program or project to take place? Maps and drawings are helpful.

#### WHY?

- Why is this project necessary? Be prepared to quantify your answer.
- Why do it (the project or program) now?
- Why did you choose these particular activities?

#### HOW?

- How will the work be performed, in-house, by contract, by volunteers?
- How will you track the results?
- How much will the project or program cost?
- How does this activity, project, or program fit the central purpose of your organization?
- How will the program/project be promoted in the community?
- How will potential participants be reached?
- How much grant support are you seeking?
- How will the activity, project, or program be funded for the long term?
- How will the results of the program/project be measured?
- How will it be determined if the program/project is successful?

AND?

- Have you involved your program/project participants in the program plans?
- Will the project have an impact beyond your targeted geographic area?

### **C. The Project or Program Introduction**

This is the section where you begin to show your agency's capability. The introduction describes the sponsoring organization and the project for which you are seeking funding. In other words, you will convincingly describe why this is a good investment for the granting organization's dollars. To further show agency capability, you may also want to provide an example of how your agency has managed a similar type of grant in the past, or you may want to indicate a staff member who is an expert in the field. Articulate your agency's history and goals and identify the objectives of the project and your plan to achieve these goals, how much money you will need, and how the money will be spent.

The information provided in the introduction should be both factual and directly related to the problem addressed by the proposal. This section further focuses on the people who will benefit from the project and should be supported by statistics and quotes. Areas to consider are:

- The purpose of the proposal.
- The nature of the problem, providing as much hard quantifiable evidence and qualitative data as possible. Qualitative data can be gathered from interviews or focus groups. Anecdotal evidence is also helpful to funders. It paints more of a picture in terms of the actual need.
- The economic, social and physical costs.
- How you came to realize the problem exists and what is currently being done to solve it.
- The alternatives available when funding has been exhausted. Explain what will happen to the project and the impending implications.
- Most importantly, the specific manner through which problems will be solved. Review the resources needed, considering how they will be used and to what end.
- The timeline, including evaluation strategies.

### **D. Defining the Need**

To convince a grantor, you must demonstrate that there is a genuine need for your project. In this section you will want to articulate who your beneficiaries are and why your project is necessary. Your goals are the broad statements of what you are planning to accomplish, whereas objectives are specific, measurable outcomes of your program. Explain the problem your agency or organization plans to address. Include verifiable statistics, feasibility studies, or specific findings that help to define the need.

Grant reviewers will often scrutinize this section of the proposal. In broad terms, goals are overall statements; objectives focus on the beneficiaries, are measurable, and have a timeline. In addition, program objectives refer to specific activities in a proposal. In this section of your grant proposal, it is important to identify outcomes related to the goals and

the methods used to achieve these objectives. Remember that the figures used should be reasonable and verifiable. If your grant proposal is successful, the program or project objectives will likely be used to evaluate the program's progress, effectiveness and success, so be realistic. Always reference your sources.

Well-defined objectives show the grantor what impact the grant money can have on a particular problem or need. Funders need to be convinced that their money or investment can actually address, change, and improve a particular situation.

The problem statement or needs assessment is an integral element of a proposal that persuasively makes a clear, concise, constructive and well-supported statement of the problem that will be addressed. In this section you need to clearly define the problem you are trying to solve. Make a connection between your organization's background and its ability to address this problem.

### **E. Program Method or Activities, and Staff Qualifications**

This section needs to drive home the message that you are highly organized and the project is ready to go. It clearly describes the activities and strategies proposed to achieve the desired results and why you have selected that approach.

The granting agency needs to know how you intend to carry out your project or program. In this section of your proposal, you further define the strategy used to achieve your stated objectives. Present a timetable to be followed and a step-by-step explanation of how you intend to proceed. Also describe the training and experience that those involved with the project will bring in order to assure success.

#### ***Monitoring – A Role for Volunteers?***

*Adding a requirement for monitoring can give your project a competitive edge if it demonstrates the ongoing engagement of the community, especially if you can create a safe, fun learning opportunity for children. Consider the example of grants involving habitat restoration or revegetation. Can you set up a docent program? Can you connect monitoring with service learning in partnership with a nearby school or an at-risk youth program? These kinds of solutions show a grantor that an investment in your project will pay lasting dividends.*

A detailed timeline is a good format to present in your proposal. Consider outlining for the grant reader the following essential components:

1. The activities to occur, along with the resources and staff needed to manage the project.
2. A flowchart of the organizational features of the project and what will be achieved. Identify required facilities, transportation, and support services, and describe how personnel and support services interrelate.
3. Key project milestones, such as when your project has successfully addressed environmental considerations or construction start dates.



4. The course of action proposed in your grant application. Carefully consider the time and money needed to accomplish each part of the plan.
5. Innovative features of the proposal that could be considered distinct. Also, highlight collaborative partnerships and describe the program or project match.

Wherever possible, use attachments to provide supporting details to your narrative. These should only be included if they add substantive value to your proposal. Extraneous data, although important to the proposal, if included in the body of the design, could detract from its readability. Attachments provide the proposal reader with immediate access to details if and when clarification of an idea, sequence, or conclusion is required. Time tables, schematic drawings, master plans, resumes of key staff, tables, work plans, schedules, legal documents (e. g., 501(c)(3) status letter), letters of support, newspaper clippings, agency brochure, and endorsements are examples of attachments.

## **F. Evaluation**

*“How are you going to know if the project or program was successful?”*

The evaluation portion of the grant proposal describes the methods and criteria selected to evaluate or measure whether the project has achieved its stated results.

Typically, the evaluation component is twofold:

- 1) Outcome evaluation – ask yourself, *“Did we make the changes we said we were going to make?”* Outcome evaluation addresses results or products that can be directly attributed to the project, as well as the extent to which the project has satisfied its desired objectives.
- 2) Process evaluation – ask yourself, *“Did we do what we said we were going to do?”* Process evaluation addresses how the project was conducted in terms of consistency with the stated plan of action such as timeline and budget, and the effectiveness of the various activities within the plan.

The types of data that are generated from different types of evaluations:

- 1) Statistical data are generated from surveys with closed-ended questions and are useful for making generalizations about your participants in the program.
- 2) Qualitative data are generated from interviews, focus groups, and open-ended questions. These types of data are useful for providing in-depth feedback and analysis on the *meaning* of the experience for those who participated in your programs.

An internal staff member of a granting agency, an evaluation firm, or both may conduct evaluations of the grant-funded project. Even if the evaluation design has to be revised as

the project or program progresses, it is much easier and cheaper in the long run to modify the conceptual design of the program or project. Keep in mind that if the problem or need statement is not well defined for cause and effect relationships, then a defensible evaluation may be difficult to achieve.

## **G. Future Long-Term Funding**

Many granting agencies do not want to support the same set of projects forever, or even more than once. They would prefer to help projects get started and then move on to new grantees, knowing that the projects will keep going with other support. For example, will volunteers be trained? Will there be additional fundraising? Will partners and co-sponsors continue to support the project or program? Be prepared to describe a defensible plan for continuation beyond the grant period, and/or the availability of other resources necessary to supplement the grant. Discuss facility maintenance and future program funding if the program is for construction or capital improvements. Account for other needed expenditures if the program includes the purchase of equipment. If the grant request is for funding for land acquisition, show how and when the land will be developed or made accessible to the public for recreation use.

## **H. The Budget Proposal**

This section of the proposal explains how the project will be funded. Budgets are cost projections with a narrative description of how the projects or programs will be implemented and managed. A well-thought out budget stays within the granting agencies funding range, follows the sponsor's guidelines and is usually presented in one or two pages.

Every proposal should include a detailed outline of planned expenses for the term of the proposal that is concise and will easily show the proposal reader what the funds will buy. Include line items that identify direct loaded personnel costs, consulting fees, environmental review; non-personnel costs such as office space, supplies, equipment, telephone, travel, and printing costs and the project's direct expenses. In most instances, costs must relate specifically to the project. Be sure you can live with this section of your proposal since you cannot go back and ask for more money simply because you forgot to list something.

Submit an itemized list of anticipated income sources. List specific funds, which may already have been approved, and list requests which are pending. Describe any and all income you expect to receive during the grant period. Explain your fundraising plan and the likelihood of success based on past experience.

While your budget projection is an estimate, you will be held to these costs, so estimate carefully. There are, however, items over which you have little control, such as fees and charges, facility lease and equipment rental. Try to be as exact as possible, and do not underestimate your expenses or you may end up with a grant that does not complete the project. The reverse is also true: do not try to pad

*Present your budget in such a manner that someone unfamiliar with your organization or agency will understand it. Don't include disallowed items and be sure to discuss ongoing operation and maintenance. Ideally, the budget proposal should be easily skimmed.*

the budget so that the organization's expenditures appear extravagant. It might be a good idea to segment your budget so it can be reduced without damaging your credibility.

Many government funding agencies have their own forms that must be used. Some foundations do not provide a budget form but leave it up to you as the grantwriter to provide the budget details. In addition to the budget you submit, you should attach a budget explanation that clarifies budget items that are not self-explanatory.

Consider these questions while developing your project or program budget:

- Can the job be accomplished with this budget and within the desired time-period?
- Are the costs reasonable and justifiable?
- Is the budget consistent with the project or program's proposed activities?
- Is there sufficient budget detail?
- Do the benefits exceed the cost?
- What is the project's in-kind match?

Have you included the time that volunteers have contributed to the agency, program, and/or project, and if so, have you calculated the dollar amount based on an accepted standard rate? According to Independent Sector, *"The dollar value of volunteer time is \$16.54 per hour for 2002. The value of volunteer time is based on the average hourly earnings of all nonagricultural workers as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Independent Sector® takes this figure and increases it by 12 percent to estimate for fringe benefits."*  
[http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer\\_time.html](http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html)

Projected expenses in your proposed budget can be divided into three sections: Personnel Expenses, Direct Project Expenses and Administrative or Overhead Expenses:

**1. Personnel Expenses** include the anticipated expenses for all individuals working on the proposed project or program. They may be employees of your agency or organization or they could be independent contractors. If they are employees, list the title, the annual pay rate and, if the person will be working less than full-time or less than 12 months on the project, the portion of time to be dedicated to the project. If you are using employees for the project, do not forget to add payroll taxes (FICA, Medicare, unemployment, and workers' compensation) and benefits such as health insurance. You can include a portion of these costs equal to the portion of the person's time dedicated to the project. However, if you are using an independent contractor, list either the flat fee or their hourly rate.

Park Superintendent (\$60,000 x 25% FTE x 7 months)  
 $\$60,000 \times .25 = \$15,000$  divided by 12 (months) =  $\$1,250 \times 7 = \underline{\$8,750}$

Percentages are based on a full-time equivalency (FTE), meaning 100 percent. Often grant proposal budgets will include a percentage of someone's time.

**2. Direct Project Expenses** are expenses you will incur when you do the project. They can be: program supplies, printing, travel costs, equipment rental, insurance, uniforms, or

food. For example, if you will be printing a youth theater program brochure, do not guess at the cost. Go to a printer or a computer expert and get a written estimate.

**3. Overhead or Administrative Expenses** are non-personnel expenses you plan to incur whether or not you do the project. Be aware that these monies cannot be used for anything else than what is stated in your budget. For example, if you pay \$1,000 a month for an office with space for four employees, you will continue to rent the office even if the project doesn't happen; however, if you are going forward with your project, one-quarter of the office space will be occupied by the project manager. This allows for a one-quarter cost of rent, utilities, and office equipment such as fax, phone, copier, postage, and office supplies. Overhead or administrative expenses may be a good source of in-kind matching funds. Check the funding program guidelines to determine if they are eligible.

Some granting agencies do not allow administrative or overhead expenses, so be sure to read the grant proposal package carefully before including these items in your proposed budget. Some grantors will provide instructions for the applicant to charge a flat percentage of the direct expenses, others will allow you to itemize. If the funder has rules about overhead, remember that some indirect personnel costs may, in fact, be considered *overhead* by the grant program and should be moved to this section.

## I. Income

Income from the project or program fits into two categories: 1) Earned Income, and 2) Contributed Income. Earned income is what your agency or organization earns for the service or product your proposed project generates. Many projects do not generate income, but some do, such as a youth theater program, which may charge for admission. The match needs to be detailed and associated with the budget line items.

Ticket sales @ \$2.50 per ticket x 6 performances x 100 seats = \$1,500\*

\* In this case, operations and maintenance costs were not included in the total.

Contributed Income is broken down into two categories, **cash** and **in-kind**.

Show **cash** contributions first and indicate whether each item is received, committed, pending, or to be submitted. For example:

Friends of Parks Foundation (received)	\$ 1,000
Lions Club (pending)	\$ 2,500
City of Parks (committed)	\$ 5,000
XYZ Corporation (received)	<u>\$ 7,500</u>
Total:	\$16,000

**In-kind** contributions are gifts of goods and services instead of cash. They can include donated computer equipment, office space, equipment, materials or time. If you list in-kind contributions as income in your budget, you must also show the corresponding expenses. If someone gives you something at a significant discount, you would want to show the whole expense and then list the portion being donated under in-kind contributions. For example:

### Expenses

Facility rental	\$ 500
Brochure designer	\$2,000
Food	\$ 500
Raffle prizes	\$ 250
Custom costumes	<u>\$1,000</u>
Total:	\$4,250

### In-kind contributions

Francis Jones, Director	\$3,500
Janice Smith (costume design, material and labor)	\$1,500
Parents of youth theater students (stage and lighting)	\$2,000
Friends of Sabville Parks Foundation (food)	<u>\$ 500</u>
Total:	\$7,500

In this example, parents are volunteering their time, and Janice Smith is donating the value of her time in constructing costumes for the production.

In-kind contributions are important for three reasons:

- 1) They show all the ways in which the community is supporting your agency's project;
- 2) They show the true cost of the program or project (what you would have to spend without the community's support) and
- 3) If you are in a matching grant situation, the contribution may be used as part of the match. For instance, if you are seeking a 50 percent matching grant for a project needing \$4,000 in cash expenses and you will generate \$4,000 in income, you may be able to ask for an \$8,000 grant.

## **J. Matching Funds**

The amount of the match shows how strongly your agency is committed to the project. Match requirements may vary among funding organizations and agencies. If you are having trouble coming up with the match, speak to the project officer, some match requirements can be waived. For example, one grant application may require a 20 percent match to the funding request, while another may not have a match requirement at all. Generally, it is in your best interest to indicate more than the minimum that is being asked as the match. During the evaluation process, full points may be awarded to the grant applicant if more than the minimum requirement is indicated.

## **K. Attachments or Appendices**

This section of the grant proposal includes peripheral or supporting information that is helpful in evaluating the proposal. These materials may provide endorsements of the project and the applicant, provide certifications and add information about project personnel and consultants, exhibit tables and charts, etc. Include only items the grant funder requested or items that support your narrative. Do not include extraneous materials.

Possible items to include are resolutions, a copy of your organization's 501(c)(3) determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service (required for most public agency grant applications), a brochure describing your agency, a list of your organization's board of directors or trustees, documentation (for example, meeting minutes) that the proposal is supported by the organization's board of directors, demographic and statistical research, letters of support, photos, schematic drawings, press clippings, maps, glossary, and environmental documents. In addition, you may wish to include a financial statement from your last complete fiscal year, including a statement of income and expenses and a balance sheet showing assets and liabilities at the end of the year. Some grant providers require an audited statement.

Policies about the inclusion of supporting materials differ widely among funders. Before submitting your grant application, find out if supporting materials are desired or even allowed. Granting agencies or organizations may ask for other material, including a copy of a nonprofit's IRS Form 990. If you do not understand what a granting agency is asking for, obtain clarification from the project officer. If you do not have some of the requested materials, attach a note explaining why they are missing and when they will be sent.

## **L. Resolutions and Authorized Signatures**

Inclusion of a resolution in the application packet demonstrates a real commitment to the project. Signatures authorizing the grant application submittal are required. Unsigned proposals may be rejected.

# 11. Nuts And Bolts—Getting Help With Some Key Grant Requirements

This section briefly identifies three topic areas that are frequently overlooked or ignored by the grantwriter. Becoming familiar with these topics and knowing where to look for help can demystify these parts of the grant application: A. Census and Demographics, B. Environmental Compliance, and C. Land Tenure.

## A. Census and Demographics

Grantwriters are frequently asked to provide information on the audience that the project will serve. Answers to questions such as, “*Describe the audience to be served by the project,*” “*Describe the socio-economic makeup service area,*” or “*Who will benefit from this grant?*” can often be found in U.S. Census Bureau statistics.

The Bureau’s Census 2000 gathered information on demographic, economic, housing and social characteristics of the population. Selected data from prior censuses may be found through the Census Bureau’s home page. Statistical data from all of these censuses are available online at [www.census.gov/](http://www.census.gov/).

The Census uses an online search engine called American FactFinder (<http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.htm>) to navigate through the material found on their site. FactFinder contains data from the decennial censuses conducted in 2000 and in 1990. Information found on FactFinder can be used to communicate trends in your service area.

Census 2000 used a short-form questionnaire to gather information. Questions on age, race, sex, Hispanic or Latino origin, and household relationship and owner- or renter-occupied housing unit information were asked of all people. A long-form questionnaire was used to gather more detailed information from approximately a 1-in-6 sample. It included the following subjects:

### Population

Age	Language spoken at home
Ancestry	Marital status
Citizenship	Means of transportation to work
Class of worker	Occupation
Disability	Place of birth
Educational attainment	Place of work
Employment status	Poverty status in 1999
Family type	Private vehicle occupancy
Foreign-born status	Race
Grandparents as caregivers	Residence in 1995
Group quarters	School enrollment
Hispanic or Latino	Sex
Household type and relationship	Travel time to work
Income in 1999	Veteran/military status
Industry	Work status in 1999
Labor force status	Workers in family in 1999

## Housing

Age of householder	Rent
Bedrooms	Rooms
Farm residence	Selected monthly owner costs
Heating fuel	Telephone service availability
Hispanic origin of householder	Tenure
Housing units	Units in structure
Kitchen facilities	Utilities in rent
Meals included in rent	Value of housing unit
Mortgage status	Vehicles available
Occupancy status	Year householder moved into unit
Plumbing facilities	Year structure built
Race of householder	

Data Sets and products for the following are available online at [www.census.gov/](http://www.census.gov/).

[108th Congressional District Summary File](#)

[Census 2000 Redistricting Data \(Public Law 94-171\)](#)

[Census 2000 Summary File 1 \(SF 1\)](#)

[Census 2000 Summary File 2 \(SF 2\)](#)

[Census 2000 Summary File 3 \(SF 3\)](#)

[Census 2000 Summary File 4 \(SF 4\)](#)

[Census 2000 Brief - Age: 2000](#)

[Census 2000 Brief - Congressional Apportionment](#)

[Census 2000 Brief - Gender: 2000](#)

[Census 2000 Brief - Households and Families: 2000](#)

[Census 2000 Brief - Housing Characteristics: 2000](#)

[Census 2000 Brief - La Población Hispana](#)

[Census 2000 Brief - Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin](#)

[Census 2000 Brief - Population Change and Distribution 1990 to 2000](#)

[Census 2000 Brief - The 65 Years and Over Population: 2000](#)

[Census 2000 Brief - The American Indian and Alaska Native Population: 2000](#)

[Census 2000 Brief - The Asian Population: 2000](#)

[Census 2000 Brief - The Black Population](#)

[Census 2000 Brief - The Hispanic Population](#)

[Census 2000 Brief - The Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Population: 2000](#)

[Census 2000 Brief - The United States in International Context: 2000](#)

[Census 2000 Brief - The White Population](#)

[Census 2000 Brief - Two or More Races Population: 2000](#)

Another primary source of demographic information is the California Department of Finance's Demographic Research Unit (DRU) [www.dof.ca.gov](http://www.dof.ca.gov). The DRU provides annual population estimates of the state, counties, and cities. Information on housing units, vacancies, average household size, components of population change, and special populations are also available. The data are used in determining the annual appropriations limit for all California jurisdictions, to distribute state subventions to cities and counties, to comply with various State codes, and for research and planning purposes by federal, state and local agencies, the academic community and the private sector.



The DRU forecasts both population and public school enrollment. Population projections are made for the state and the counties for 50 years into the future with age, sex, and race/ethnic detail. The enrollment forecasts have a 10-year outlook and are available at the county level for kindergarten through high school graduates. Post-secondary education enrollment is available on a statewide basis. As direct inputs to the State budget, the Unit biannually provides short-term statewide population and kindergarten through 12th grade Average Daily Attendance projections.

## B. Environmental Compliance

If your project involves land and/or structures you may need to comply with state or federal environmental laws. Many governmental grants require the grantor to complete a section on the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), or – if the project is on federal land, requires a federal permit or license, or is funded in whole or part with federal funds – the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). It can take months to complete an environmental compliance process, and it is strongly suggested you allow enough time to complete the CEQA and/or NEPA review. If you need help completing this section, ask for assistance from your project officer or contact your agency staff responsible for environmental review and assessment.

The California Environmental Quality Act, is a California statute requiring state and local agencies to identify and consider the significant environmental impacts of their actions and to avoid or mitigate those impacts, if feasible. The basic goal of the California Environmental Quality Act (Pub. Res. Code §21000 et seq.) is to develop and maintain a high-quality environment now and in the future, while the specific goals of CEQA are for California's public agencies to:

1. Identify the significant environmental effects of their actions; and, either
2. Avoid those significant environmental effects, where feasible; or
3. Mitigate those significant environmental effects, where feasible.

A public agency must comply with CEQA when it undertakes an activity defined by CEQA as a *project*. A project is an activity that may cause either a direct physical change or a reasonably foreseeable indirect change in the environment and is to be undertaken by a public agency or by a private entity that must receive some level of discretionary approval from a government agency.

Most proposals for physical development in California are subject to the provisions of CEQA, as are many governmental decisions which do not immediately result in physical development (such as adoption of a general or community plan). Every project that requires discretionary governmental approval will require at least some environmental review

*“Conservation today means far more than just preserving our natural resources. It means their wise use and protection so that more and more people may enjoy and benefit from them. Only in so doing may our individual human resources be enriched.”*

*Laurence S. Rockefeller*

pursuant to CEQA, unless an exemption applies.

Projects may include the enactment of zoning ordinances, the issuance of conditional use permits, and the approval of tentative subdivision maps.

Where a project requires approvals from more than one public agency, CEQA generally requires one of these public agencies to serve as the *lead agency* (the first governmental agency responsible for compliance with CEQA for a proposed project).

Unless a project is categorically, statutorily or ministerially exempt from CEQA, a public *lead agency* must complete the environmental review process required by CEQA. The most basic steps of the environmental review process are:

1. Determine if the activity is a *project* subject to CEQA;
2. Determine if the *project* is *exempt* from CEQA;
3. Perform an Initial Study to identify the environmental impacts of the project and determine whether the identified impacts are *significant*. Based on its findings of *significance*, the lead agency prepares one of the following environmental review documents:
  - a. Negative Declaration if it finds no *significant* impacts;
  - b. Mitigated Negative Declaration if it finds *significant* impacts but revises the project to avoid or mitigate those significant impacts; and
  - c. Environmental Impact Report (EIR) if it finds *significant* impacts.

While there is no ironclad definition of *significance*, the State CEQA Guidelines provide criteria in article 5 to lead agencies to determine whether a project may have significant effects.

The purpose of an EIR is to provide detailed information on significant environmental effects that a proposed project is likely to have, and to list ways in which the significant environmental effects will be minimized or alternatives to the project provided.

*Since laws governing CEQA change, it is always best to check with your agency's environmental specialist for guidance and assistance. Be sure to allow yourself plenty of time to prepare the necessary documents.*

Both CEQA and CEQA Guidelines are available online at <http://ceres.ca.gov/ceqa/>. Print copies are available to the public in county libraries, as well as at college and university libraries.

## C. Land Tenure

Land tenure is generally required for capital improvements funded by grants. The grant applicant must have a legally established connection with property to be improved with grant funds, either by ownership, lease, or other long-term interest. Generally, the length of the tenure must be sufficient to complete the project and to meet any program requirements for

ongoing maintenance and operations. Tenure requirements vary greatly between grant programs. Some programs will require that the lands and/or facilities funded through the grant be retained and available for public park and recreation purposes in perpetuity, regardless of the amount. Other programs will allow the funds to be “amortised.”

As an example, for Recreational Trails Program capital expenditure project funding (permanent additions or improvements to property), the total tenure requirements are ten years for grants of less than \$100,000, fifteen years for grants between \$100,000 and \$200,000, and twenty years for grants over \$200,000. For non-capital expenditure projects (maintenance, equipment purchase, safety education), the length of the applicant’s tenure, if applicable, must be sufficient to complete the proposed project and justify the investment of grant funds. For equipment purchases over \$30,000, the depreciation schedule requirement is ten years. Such tenure requirements often can be met when responsibility for the completed project’s operation and maintenance is reassigned to or is the responsibility of another agency, such as the public land owner or manager. These partnership arrangements allow relatively new or smaller nonprofit organizations to receive grants, complete projects, but avoid the requirement of becoming land managers.

Since trails are linear, they often require land tenure arrangements with many property owners. Clarify the type of arrangement for each property. A map or a table identifying land tenure can help a grant reviewer understand the legal ownership of the project you propose.

#### **Forms of Land Tenure**

##### **A. Land Ownership**

Fee Title

Less Than Fee Simple

Right-of-way

Easement (*such as agricultural easement, conservation easement, open space easement, trail easement*)

Development Right (*for utility, conservation, airspace use, urban recreation, soil, water, etc.*)

##### **B. Leasehold**

##### **C. Joint-use Agreement**

Joint Powers Agreement(JPA)

Operating Agreement

Memorandum of Understanding(MOU)



## 12. Submitting a Winning Proposal

Before you place a stamp on your proposal's envelope, review the checklist below to see if your proposal is complete.

### A. Checklist of Proposal *Do's* and *Don'ts*

#### DO!

- ✓ Make sure the rest of the staff is on board prior to submitting the grant proposal.
- ✓ Ask for assistance from the project officer.
- ✓ Submit a legible and complete proposal.
- ✓ Submit a proposal that is project-ready when the funds materialize.
- ✓ Write a memorable proposal.
- ✓ Explain how your idea, project, or program fits with the granting agency's funding initiatives or mission, especially if the funder knows little about the field of parks, recreation, and leisure services.
- ✓ Answer all the questions and follow the directions in the proposal guidelines!
- ✓ Demonstrate how your proposed project will be solving a community problem.
- ✓ Make the proposal interesting and easy to read. Never make the reader do extra work flipping through your application from one section to another.
- ✓ Create smooth transitions between sections. Use subheadings. Maintain a balance between conciseness and detail. Use the terms that used in the guideline – *use the funding agency's exact terminology*.
- ✓ Be creative and always tailor your request to that of the individual funder.
- ✓ Be organized and give concrete examples.
- ✓ Emphasize content over writing style.
- ✓ Be specific about the types of support your partners will provide.

#### DON'T!

- ✓ Turn in documents after the deadline.
- ✓ Leave things to the last minute.
- ✓ Fail to provide secured matching funds.
- ✓ Fax the application unless doing so is acceptable to the granting agency and you are able to verify that the grant proposal was received.
- ✓ Be overly ambitious with your project proposal.
- ✓ Supply more information than is requested.
- ✓ Be afraid to resubmit a previously unfunded proposal (but revise it after first obtaining the reviewers' comments and the funder's recommendation).
- ✓ Disregard the needed environmental requirements or the timeline to complete the environmental review process.
- ✓ Be vague and non-committal.

## **B. Landmines and Quicksand — Pitfalls in Asking for Grant Funding**

1. Make sure your application is signed. You could lose precious points during the scoring process if your application is not signed when it's turned in.
2. Don't request grant money to offset an agency's deficit. No grant funder wants to fund your agency's poor planning or shortfall.
3. Carefully proof the final grant application, or better, have someone familiar with the project who has not read the grant guidelines review it. This will save you a lot of time and considerable effort in the end. There are many grant applications and programs that look and sound alike and accessing or downloading the wrong application is easy to do. Highlight the most important parts, and when you have questions or need clarification, speak to a project officer.
4. Watch your grant application deadlines and give yourself lots of time to prepare each of the components of the application.
5. Don't assume proposal readers will mentally fill in the missing information in the grant application. It's bad news if you assume the grant reader knows your agency or organization. It's not a good idea to depend on prior knowledge or past relationships.
6. Try not to be redundant. Saying what you want to say once is usually enough. Filling in answers with 'fluff' is usually not advisable. But be aware some grant applications may ask for essentially the same information in several places. Answer their redundant questions, using different wording, if possible. Don't write "*Refer to question #x.*"
7. A pitfall many grantwriters fall into is turning in a previous proposal without updating it first. If you're going to re-use a former proposal, update it with current dates, numbers, and staff members.
8. Don't ask for nonqualifying expense items. Even if the item is initially funded, auditors can catch these items after the grant is awarded.
9. Double-check your budget for mathematical errors and be realistic with what you need.
10. Be careful if you engage someone to lobby on your behalf for the grant application you have submitted. Sometimes this can backfire, doing more harm than good.
11. Sometimes it's easy to overlook an application question or make the assumption you answered it already in a different section. Doing this may change the format of your submitted application and could cost you points during scoring.

## **C. Submitting a Proposal**

Follow instructions carefully for submitting a proposal. Submit a hard copy of your application package by mail several days before the grant deadline to ensure that the funding agency receives it in time. Most agencies will accept hand delivered applications when time is of the essence. Do not send electronically generated applications unless specifically directed to do so. Meeting the proposal submittal deadline is critical.

## **D. Following Up**

Within the next few weeks, make a phone call to the grant project officer to follow up on the grant request, ensure that it was received, determine the status of the proposal, and check to see if the granting agency has any questions. Funders follow different procedures in their methods of reviewing proposals.

You may receive a letter stating that your proposal has been received and assigned to a project or a program officer. The project officer may have questions about your budget, or require further background information. Many times granting agencies are interested in a request but cannot act upon the request until they have additional information. A helpful follow-up call may move your proposal towards the top of the pile.

While your proposal is being considered, your program or project may receive additional match funding. If so, call or write the granting agency with the update on your organization's activities. Additional letters of support may be helpful at this stage.

When your project is being considered by a funding agency, a project officer may elect to conduct a site visit. If this occurs prepare carefully for the visit by anticipating the kinds of questions or areas of specific interest. Again, if you are unclear, contact the project officer and seek clarification.

If your proposal is rejected, by all means speak to the project officer to determine how it scored and what might be done to improve your project's chances in the next round. It is not unusual, especially for those new to grantwriting, to find that your project scored low in an area that, with a little more explanation, could put you in over the top.

*Evaluation panels often select projects with a clearly defined purpose that demonstrate they are ready to go, rather than projects that attempt to address multiple priorities.*

***Evaluators Look For:***

*A clear, well-written proposal, that is consistent with their (the funder's) mission, that the applicant completed all sections of the guidelines correctly, and provided all the requested material.*



## 13. The Proposal Evaluation Process

### A. The Evaluation Process – What is Involved?

When the proposal has been submitted, you will breathe a well-deserved sigh of relief, but what happens then? Your proposal makes its way through an evaluation system. The processes vary from one agency to the next, but they are similar. Your proposal is collected, copied, distributed and evaluated according to some kind of criteria. For example, foundations follow different procedures for reviewing proposals. Some review them as they arrive, while others have a set time of year. The proposal is evaluated by ranking criteria and assigned a rating. Ranking criteria are normally described in the application guidelines. Different readers may look at the proposal sections independently from others. For example an expert in environmental requirements may be asked to review that documentation section.

There are some specific tasks you may want to do to stay on top of the process:

1. You may receive a letter stating your proposal has been received and assigned to a project officer. A few weeks after submittal, phone to follow up and inquire with your assigned project officer, the status of the proposal. Check to see if the reviewing agency or organization has any questions. Many times a project officer may be interested in your proposal but needs additional information to clarify a point. The project officer may have attempted to reach you but was unsuccessful and because of their work load shifts your proposal to the rejection pile. A follow up call may make all the difference in moving your proposal forward for serious consideration.
2. It is *possible* that your request may receive more serious consideration if a member of your board speaks on your organization or agency's behalf. This may be more applicable to a foundation grant request than a public agency grant. If you feel a member of your board lends credibility to the success of the project, then by all means, ask him/her to contact the granting entity.
3. While your proposal is being considered, additional letters of support may be helpful. The project officer assigned to your proposal will be able to advise you.

### B. Understanding the Review Process

Successful grantwriters have learned to request a list of previous reviewers for governmental grants. If the list is available to you, look for any links you could use in contacting them. For example, are they members of your community? If, however, you are unable to find a link, call a reviewer and ask a few questions about their experience as a reviewer for that

program. For example, prior to developing your application you might want to ask them:

- *What were you told to look for?*
- *How would you suggest writing a proposal differently now that you have been a reviewer?*
- *How many proposals were you given to read?*
- *What were the most common mistakes you noticed in reviewing the grant proposals?*

### **C. What Do Evaluators Look For?**

The project officer will be evaluating your proposal for two key areas of interest - product and process. Product evaluation addresses results that can be attributed to the project, as well as the extent to which the project is likely to satisfy its desired objectives. Process evaluation addresses how the project will be conducted in terms of consistency with the stated plan of action and the effectiveness of the various activities within the plan.

Evaluation requires both coordination and agreement among program decision-makers. Many public agencies require the applicant to provide evidence of program or project evaluation. In other words, how will you determine if your proposal is successful? What measures and other factors did you use to determine its success? It's a good idea to state the amount of time needed to accomplish defined tasks and identify factors for meeting your goals and objectives.

Remember that the evaluator is looking to get the largest return for their investment. There are many reasons why grant applications are rejected:

1. There was simply not enough money available for all the projects that were submitted. It may be that while your project was a good match, there were more competitive projects submitted in this round.
2. The applicant did not follow the guidelines provided by the funder. For example, the application did not provide all the information requested and the proposal objectives did not match the objectives of the funding source. The proposal budget was confusing or not within the range of funding available or the local matching funds were inadequate or uncertain.
3. The application lacked credibility. The grant proposal had inflated rhetoric and assumed that its readers were familiar with or predisposed to support the application.
4. The grant application included errors in fact, grammar, spelling, and mathematics.
5. The application did not adequately explain the project or the program and the needs statement was poorly articulated. Avoid acronyms and writing in 'bureaucratese.' Phrases repeated throughout the proposal can lose meaning. The proposal needs to clearly articulate the problem or reason for requesting funding assistance. For example, stating the problem in quantifiable terms provides the measurable documentation needed for review by the evaluator.

Perhaps the scope of work was vague or too ambitious. Maybe the application showed disorganization or illogical sequencing of proposed activities. Or perhaps the applicant depended on a sympathetic evaluation panel to pull an unpersuasive application through.

## **D. Common Problems Cited by Proposal Reviewers**

Reviewers cite common problems with grant proposals, many involving incomplete proposal packages. Take a few minutes to review some more common reasons proposals were rejected:

- The proposal had sections that were not complete or lacked supporting documentation. Applicant did not follow the guidelines provided by the funding agency.
- The project cited findings based on a shaky hypothesis or incomplete data. Statistical or demographic data were weak. In essence, the application lacked credibility.
- The problem was more complex than the proposer appeared to realize.
- The applicant did not have a strong enough track record to support the award.
- The project or program was not adequately or clearly explained.
- The project appeared too ambitious for the projected cost.
- There just was not enough money to go around.



## 14. You Got the Grant, Now What?

Congratulations, your project was selected to receive funding and you now have a signed agreement. Your staff, board and other decision-makers are delighted, and you are ready to get started turning your proposed project into reality. You must conscientiously handle the funds while keeping your board and the grantor informed of your progress.

The goal of this entire grant process is to make a real, measurable difference in your community. By having your project selected, you are well on your way. To quickly recap, the process has involved much of your time researching funding sources, developing the grant scope and proposal, working with community members, strengthening partnerships, and preparing the grant application. Now that you have been awarded the grant, the next logical step is administering the project and the grant funds wisely – the really hard part.

Since most grants are for a specific time period or the grantor expects the project to be completed within a certain timeframe, the grant recipient has to be mindful of project deadlines. Governmental grants can revert if the project is not completed on time, or may require the project funds to be re-appropriated.

### A. Grant Record-Keeping

One thing is sure, if you receive a grant, you will be required to prepare expenditure reports. Each granting agency will provide guidance as to what they need for their records, but if you have questions, be sure to ask your project officer for clarification.

Many governmental or public agency granting agencies allow contract amendments within certain limits. For example, minor project or program scope amendments may be allowed if the cost, outcome and project beneficiaries remain the same. Be sure to get amendments approved before the work occurs and/or costs are incurred.

Reports on the grant activity fill several functions:

- 1. Accountability and Project Management** – Grant funders have a right to know what you have accomplished and when. Grant recipients are held accountable to the funder to explain how they managed the project and how the funds were spent. For record-keeping purposes, be sure to keep all receipts, payroll records and other related grant expenditure documents. Set up a special account to track all project expenditures and revenues. Keep a photographic record of your project progress, if possible.
- 2. Public Relations** – Many agencies and foundations use reporting information in their annual report, publications, and press releases. The use of this information helps your agency gain added exposure and recognition. You may be asked to report media coverage and

provide copies of brochures, flyers, photographs and articles to the granting agency.

3. **Fundraising** – Some community foundations solicit donations from the community to pass through to their grantees. If these foundations can demonstrate effective grantmaking, their credibility improves and they raise additional monies. This, in turn, helps local organizations by increasing the pool of funds available for future grants.

## **B. Strategies to Keep the Grantor Happy**

Securing a grant is the first step in the grant process. Managing or administering the grant in such a way as to maintain or enhance your credibility with the grantor is an important second step in the process. If you do not manage the grant well, your poor track record could be a factor in determining whether you receive subsequent grants from that funder.

Some very simple, but often overlooked, common sense strategies *that work*:

1. If possible, select one person in your agency as the grant coordinator.
2. Make sure you research and understand the grant process prior to contacting a program officer.
3. Include well-chosen, labeled photographs and maps.
4. If you do not understand something about the grant process, ask rather than do it incorrectly.
5. Send correspondence to a person (the *right* person), not to an 'office.'
6. When signing documents, remember to put the date and title of the person signing.
7. Include the project name and grant number on all correspondence.
8. Be as explicit as you can in correspondence.
9. Send separate letters for each grant when multiple grants are involved or extra copies if a single letter is used.
10. Organize your projects in separate files. This will not only aid you at the present time but would also help should another person take over in mid-stream, and it facilitates the audit when the project is completed.
11. Keep the grantor informed; call, email or drop a note periodically regarding the status of the project, particularly for long-term projects.

12. Vigorously pursue the project to a prompt and satisfactory conclusion.
13. When the project is physically complete – promptly submit the paperwork necessary to close out the grant.
14. Be certain to formally thank and acknowledge the funder and your partners when and wherever possible.
15. Give advance notice and invite the project officer and/or the grant manager and the Chief Executive Officer to ribbon cutting ceremonies, and have your local legislator, mayor, supervisor, or organization's head acknowledge the involvement of the fund provider or fund source.

## C. Giving the Money Back

No recreation and park agency or organization wants to give grant money back; however, some projects of merit have successfully received funding, but for a broad range of reasons are simply not able to move forward. In some cases, decision-makers may vote to cancel the project altogether, or the funding agency no longer has evidence of your intentions to spend their dollars as promised and requests that the grant be returned.

In other cases, agencies may be able to begin the project but are not able to finish or are not able to comply with the required standards. Whatever the reason, when issues or concerns arise such as these, by all means discuss them with your project officer. Assuming that all possible attempts to re-negotiate with the funding agency have been unsuccessful, keep your chin up and comply with their request to return the grant funds.

## D. Ten Tips for Staying on Track

1. **Be Honest** – If you discover that an error has been made, or that someone else has been less than honest, tell the project officer as soon as you learn the truth. If a funded portion of the project was not carried out as promised, or an evaluation was not done, apologize to the project officer and try to set things right as soon as possible.
2. **Periodically Meet with the Project Manager** – It is a good idea to meet on a regular basis with the project manager to review how the project is progressing. For some projects, quarterly or monthly meetings or phone calls are adequate; for others, you might consider meeting or phoning more frequently. At these meetings, be prepared to address pointed questions, such as:
  - How does the actual project compare with the proposal?
  - Is the timeline consistent with the proposal?
  - Are you spending money at an appropriate rate?
  - Are changes needed?"

Adjustments are to be expected, since most grant proposals contain an element of improvisation. If you find that you require a major change to the project, notify the

granting agency's project officer and discuss the changes with them. Remember that an awarded grant proposal is a contract and both parties – grantor and grantee, must approve significant alterations. Your time is better spent adapting the project to achieve a more solid success than adapting a project with a lesser value.

3. **Take Lots of Notes and Photos** – You cannot write an accurate final report unless you keep track of the outcomes of meetings, how the funds are spent, and who is doing what as it relates to the project.
4. **Thank the Grant Donors** – Mention project supporters and agency funders in agency publications, public service announcements, letters to the editor and on your agency's web site, unless they wish to remain anonymous.
5. **Save All News Articles and Press Releases** – If a newspaper publishes an article about the project, make a copy, and submit with the final report. If a story about the project is reported on radio or TV, indicate this in your final report.
6. **Follow Instructions** – Grantors will tell you what they want to have included in the final report. Give them what they want.
7. **Keep It Simple** – Project officers want you to be selective with what you write and attach to the final report. Similar to the grant proposal, they want you to be clear and concise.
8. **Review Project Expenses Each Month** – Track the cash flow for the project. Make copies of all receipts and document all expenditures.
9. **Keep In Touch With Your Project Officer** – Communicate with your project officer on a regular basis. Send a thank you letter as soon as you are notified of being awarded the grant. Call or send a short note or a copy of a newspaper article. Put the project officer on your mailing list to receive agency newsletters, activity guides, annual reports, and other publications. Send photographs of the project's progress if you think it would be of interest to the project officer.
10. **Agency Credibility Is Very Important** – Grant funders want to derive the most benefit possible from their funding. Agency credibility provides added assurance that a funded project will be completed on time and within the prescribed budget. Projects that are not completed or are late in meeting agreed deadlines tie up grant money that the granting organization could have used for other worthwhile projects. If your agency is unable to complete a grant-funded project, agency credibility is reduced, as is the possibility of securing future grants.